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MEDIEVAL INDIAN SCULPTURE

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

By

RAMAPRASAD CHANDA, F.A.S.B.

Late Superintendent of the Archaeological Section,
Indian Museum, Calcutta.

Introduction by

R. L. HOBSON, C.B.

Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiquities
and of Ethnography, British Museum.

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Rai Bahadur

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[1] All the examples reproduced are in the British Museum unless otherwise stated.

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INTRODUCTION

IT was a lucky chance that brought the Rai Bahadur Chanda to London at the very moment when the Galleries of Oriental Religions in the British Museum were about to be rearranged. It had been decided to abandon the classification by religions in favour of a historical arrangement which is more in keeping with the general plan of the Museum, and the redundant sculpture was to be weeded out to make room for the collections of antiquities.

In this task of revision the Rai Bahadur volunteered to assist with his wide knowledge and experience. His enthusiasm for Indian art, in which he had long been actively interested, was stirred by the Collection, and it is gratifying to know that he was so impressed with its importance that he decided to devote a monograph to it.

The appreciation of Oriental art, particularly of its Far-Eastern manifestations, has been growing rapidly in Europe; and the powerful influence of Indian religious sculpture on that of China and Japan has now given to Indian sculpture a prominence which is fully justified by its own inherent merits.

But it was not always so. For many years the beauty of Indian sculpture received scant appreciation, and the history of the Bridge, or more properly the Charles Stuart, Collection makes this painfully clear.

General Charles Stuart, who served in India from 1777 to 1828, was noted for his love of Indian culture. So deeply was he imbued with Indian ideas and manners that he came to be familiarly known as "Hindoo" Stuart. In his later days his house was a museum of Indian sculpture, collected chiefly in the districts of Bihar and Orissa, and it was open to all who cared to come and see it.

After his death a few of his sculptures remained to adorn

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his tomb, as will be seen in the first plate of this book. The bulk of the remainder was brought to London by his descendants, and offered for sale at Christie's in 1830. Here they were bought by one James Bridge, whose heirs in their turn offered them for sale in 1872. So little was the interest taken in Indian art at this time that Sir Wollaston Franks, Keeper of the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities in the British Museum, was the only bidder at the auction, and the collection was knocked down to him for a "mere song". It was, however, arranged subsequently that it should be presented by the heirs of Mr. Bridge as a gift to the Museum.

In this way 115 sculptures were acquired. The majority of the other specimens in the British Museum were transferred from the India Museum in 1880. Together they make a noble display which has now been improved by the elimination of duplicates.

The present monograph describes and illustrates a number of the most important specimens, but its scope is limited to the Medieval sculpture and it takes no account of the large Gandhara series which is also exhibited in the Indian Room, or of the grand sculptures from the Amaravati Tope which line the main staircase of the British Museum. It deals only with a portion of the history of Indian sculpture, but it is a portion which shows the art in its liveliest and most sensitive forms.

The full explanations given of the various motives will be widely welcomed. The subjects depicted in the sculptured reliefs are so complex that without some instruction in their meaning the spectator is liable to be robbed of part of his pleasure by sheer bewilderment. When he understands the incidents depicted, as he will do after reading the stories told by the Rai Bahadur, he will be able to enjoy whole-heartedly the singular beauty of the Indian sculptor's work and to appreciate the enthusiasm which inspired this monograph.

R. L. Hobson.

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PREFACE

THIS little book owes its inception to a visit to the galleries of the British Museum, London, in July, 1934, under the guidance of Mr. J. V. S. Wilkinson of the Department of Oriental Printed Books and MSS. In the Indian Sculpture Rooms Mr. Wilkinson introduced me to Messrs. H. J. Braunholtz and A. Digby, of the Department of Ethnography, and requested me to examine the labels and offer suggestions, if any. I was surprised to see a very large collection of well-preserved sculptures in stone, from different parts of Northern India, little known to the public, exhibited in the rooms, and expressed a desire to study them. Messrs. Braunholtz and Digby kindly placed all the records relating to the collection at my disposal. Mr. T. A. Joyce, Deputy Keeper of the Department of Ethnography, later on introduced me to Mr. Basil Gray of the Department of Oriental Antiquities, who very courteously co-operated with me and afforded me all facilities for preparing a descriptive list of the sculptures. Through Mr. Gray I came in contact with Mr. R. L. Hobson, head of the Department of Oriental Antiquities and of Ethnography, and we arranged that I should write a small volume on the Indian Medieval Sculptures in the British Museum. Mr. Hobson undertook to check the descriptive portion of the book and to contribute an introductory chapter giving the history of the collections. This book owes its publication to Mr. Gray who has not only made arrangement for its publication through Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., but has also very kindly seen it through the press. The authorities of the British Museum prepared fresh photo-negatives at my request to illustrate this book, and supplied me with paper impressions of the inscriptions. I take this opportunity of giving expression to my sense of gratitude to these gentlemen

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and particularly to Messrs. Hobson and Gray. My acknowledgments are also due to my pupil and friend, Mr. Paramananda Archarya, B.Sc., State Archæologist, Mayurbhanj, who was then in London, for a few valuable suggestions regarding the sculptures from Orissa, and to Sir Evan Cotton, Professor F. W. Thomas, Dr. L. D. Barnett, and Mr. J. V. S. Wilkinson, for encouragement.

I am indebted to Mr. N. Ganguly of the Calcutta Historical Society for the photograph of the tomb of "Hindoo" Stuart in the South Park Street Cemetery, Calcutta. The original arched doorway of black basalt fixed on the tomb is unique in character. The figure of the river goddess Yamunā riding on a tortoise carved on the pilaster that serves as the left door jamb, and the figure of Gaṅgā riding on a *makara* carved on the other pilaster that serves as the right door jamb, indicate that the doorway originally belonged to an ancient Brahmanic temple. The trefoil arch above the pilasters is not a true arch. The lower foils are cut out of the same pieces as the pilasters and the upper foil is cut out of the horizontal door lintel. The moulding is decorated by a single line of graceful scroll-work consisting of flowers and figures of animals combined harmoniously. At the apex of the moulding is carved in high relief a lotus flower, the petals of which are pulsating with life. Above, at two ends, are carved two miniature Indo-Aryan temples, and in the middle a head serene in expression. The small structures on either side of the head are modern restorations. In the spaces between the miniature structures and the head four trees are carved with vigour. This arched door-way must have been fixed on the tomb, instead of being despatched to England, under the direction of General Charles Stuart himself, who died at Calcutta on 31st March, 1828.

RAMAPRASAD CHANDA.

CALCUTTA.
3rd October, 1935.

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MEDIEVAL INDIAN SCULPTURE

Chapter I

BEGINNINGS OF FIGURE SCULPTURE IN INDIA

THE history of Indian art, as distinguished from its pre-history in the Indus valley, begins from the third century B.C. About half a dozen detached life-size figures assignable to the second and the first centuries B.C. are the earliest known figure sculptures. These are evidently images of minor deities, Yakshas and Yakshīs, some of whom, bearing *chauri* or fly-whisks, must have served the function of attendants. There is a predominance of decorative bas-reliefs over detached statues in this early period. The bulk of these reliefs decorate great Buddhist monuments: the railing round the stūpa of Bharhut (*c.* 150 B.C.); the old railing round the Bodhi-tree at Bodh Gaya (*c.* 100 B.C.); and the four gateways of the Great Stūpa at Sāñchī (*c.* 50 B.C.). With the exception of the early Vedic religion of *karma*, work or sacrificial rites, all other Indian religions—Vedāntism (the religion of the concluding portion of the Vedas called the Upanishads), Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishṇavism, Śaivism, and Śāktism—are based on a firm belief in the doctrine of the transmigration of the soul, and final liberation from the revolving wheel of rebirths is fixed as their common goal. According to the Buddhists attainment of *bodhi*, enlightenment or supreme knowledge, or *sambodhi*, perfect enlightenment, is the means of reaching this goal, and one who has gained that knowledge and therefore reached the goal is called the Buddha or the Sambuddha. In course of undergoing rebirths a being is liable to be born not only as a human and superhuman being, but also as a lower animal. A being destined to become Buddha,

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the Enlightened One, in a future birth as man, or in a later period of a particular birth as man, is called the Bodhisattva or would-be-Buddha. A human Bodhisattva must be distinguished from the superhuman (divine) Bodhisattvas worshipped by the Mahāyāna Buddhists. A human Bodhisattva must practise virtues through a succession of births before he can attain Buddhahood. In the bas-reliefs on the Buddhist monuments named above are narrated events believed to have happened in the previous births and the last birth of Gautama Buddha as the Bodhisattva and the Buddha.

One very striking feature of the narrative reliefs on these old railings and the gateways is the absence of the figure of the Buddha himself. In these sculptures the Buddha is represented either by an empty throne, or by footprints, or other symbols. This peculiarity of the early Buddhist narrative reliefs is very clearly brought out in a few reliefs on the railing of the stūpa of Bharhut (now exhibited in the Indian Museum, Calcutta), that bear contemporary inscriptions which give the titles of the subjects. Plate II (*a*) shows a medallion on a rail pillar. The inscription below the medallion tells us :—

"Anāthapiṇḍika (Anāthapiṇḍada) gives away Jetavana (which) he has purchased by covering the plot with a layer of crores (of gold coins)."

The story referred to in this record is narrated in one of the early Pali texts, *Vinaya Piṭaka* (Chullavagga, 6, 4, 8–10).[1] Two different episodes are enclosed side by side within the medallion. In the right half Anāthapiṇḍika is paying the price of the plot by covering it with square gold coins carried in a bullock cart. To the left he is giving away the plot to the Buddha. According to ancient Indian usage a donor makes a gift by pouring water on the hands of the donee. In the centre of the medallion is recognizable Anāthapiṇḍika standing with a water-pot ready to pour water on the hands of the donee. The inscription describes him as making the gift. But where

[1] *Vinaya Texts*, pt. ii, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xx.

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is the donee, the Buddha ? The figure of the Buddha has been deliberately omitted.

A fragmentary medallion on another rail pillar (Plate II (*b*)), of Bharhut encloses a scene labelled, " Indraśāla cave." The event that happened in a cave called the Indraśāla cave on the Vediya mountain to the east of Rājagṛiha, the capital of Magadha in the time of Gautama Buddha, is described in an old Pali Buddhist text, *Sakka-pañña Suttanta*, the questions of Śakra (Indra, king of the gods), of the *Dīghanikāya*. Herein it is said that once when the Buddha was staying in the Indraśāla cave, Śakra went to visit him accompanied by the other gods and attended by the Gandharva (heavenly musician) Pañchaśikha with his lyre. As the Buddha usually remained rapt in the bliss of meditation (*dhyāna*), Śakra sent Pañchaśikha ahead of the party to awaken the master. Approaching the cave, Pañchaśikha sung a song to the accompaniment of his lyre. The Buddha, charmed by the music, called Pañchaśikha. Śakra with the other gods followed the latter inside the cave where the Buddha was seated in meditation and was permitted to put questions.[1] The bas-relief shows a cave wherein the gods are seated with joined palms round an empty throne with a parasol above it. This empty throne represents the Buddha.

The inscription on a panel of a corner pillar of the same railing reads :—

" Ajātaśatru worships the Lord (Buddha)."

The relief in the panel illustrates the introductory portion of the Pali Buddhist text, *Samañña-phala Sutta* (the fruits of the life of recluse) of the *Dīghanikāya*. One autumn night lit by full moon, Ajātaśatru, king of Magadha, accompanied by Jīvaka, the court-physician, and attended by five hundred of his women on she-elephants, visited the Buddha. When the king reached the door of the pavilion on foot, he asked Jīvaka, " But where, Jīvaka, is the Lord ? " Jīvaka replied, " That is he, O king." Then the king bowed to the Lord, and, stretching

[1] T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, pt. iii, London, 1910, p. 299 ff.

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forth his joined hands in salutation to the order, took his seat aside.[1]

The bas-relief, Plate III (*a*), correctly illustrates the narrative as far as space permits. At the bottom, on the left, three elephants come out in procession, the leader, a tusker, the state elephant, conveying the king himself whose rank is indicated by the parasol held over his head. To the right of this scene the tusker is kneeling down.

Ajātaśatru has got down from the elephant and asked Jīvaka where was the Buddha. Jīvaka is pointing out the Buddha with his right hand. In the next scene carved above Ajātaśatru, seated on his knees, is bowing down with joined hands. But where is the Buddha, the object of Ajātaśatru's adoration? The Buddha is represented by an empty throne under a parasol, with footprints beneath it.

But not only is the figure of Gautama Buddha, the historical founder of Buddhism, conspicuous by its absence on early Buddhist monuments of Central and Eastern India; his predecessors, the Buddhas who are said to have flourished before him, are not figured thereon. Six previous Buddhas are named in early Pali texts. They are :—

	Sanskrit Name.	*Pali Name.*
1.	Vipaśyin	Vipassi
2.	Śikhin	Sikhi
3.	Viśvabhū	Vessabhu
4.	Krakuchchhanda	Kakusandha
5.	Kanakamuni	Konagamana
6.	Kāśyapa	Kassapa

As Gautama Buddha attained the *bodhi* (enlightenment) or Buddhahood under an Aśvattha or Pipal tree which is known as his Bodhi, his six predecessors also had their Bodhis or trees sitting under which they attained *bodhi*. The Bodhi trees of Vipaśyin, Viśvabhū, Kanakamuni (Konagamana), and Kāśyapa are carved in the medallions of the rail pillars of Bharhut with thrones below. The figures of these Buddhas do not occupy these

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, pt. i, London, 1923, pp. 65–8.

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thrones, but, like the throne of Gautama Buddha, they are left vacant. One of these medallions is reproduced in Plate III (*b*). The second inscription above the medallion tells us :—

"The Bodhi (tree) of Lord Vipaśyin."

According to the Buddhist canon Pāṭali is the tree under which Vipaśyin gained *bodhi*.

Early Buddhist texts name six great rivals of Gautama Buddha, "being teachers well known, famous leaders, considered excellent by the multitude," one of whom is called Nigantha Nāṭaputta in Pali and Nirgrantha Jñātiputra or Jñātṛiputra in Sanskrit. The proper name of Nirgrantha Jñātṛiputra is Mahāvira Vardhamāna, the last Tīrthaṅkara or Jina of the Jains and the founder of Jainism, a religion which still survives in India and the monumental remains of which are quite numerous. Vardhamāna Mahāvīra became Jina, conqueror, by gaining perfect knowledge called *kevala*, corresponding to the *bodhi* of the Buddha. Vardhamāna the Jina is also called the Buddha, and Gautama the Buddha is also called the Jina. But in common parlance the term Jina is applied to Vardhamāna Mahāvīra and his predecessors, and the term Buddha to Gautama and his predecessors. Twenty-three Jinas or Tīrthaṅkaras are said to have flourished before Mahāvīra, among whom the most famous are the first Jina Ṛishabha and the twenty-third Jina Pārśva or Pārśvanātha. No image of any of the Jinas assignable to an age earlier than the beginning of the Christian era has yet been discovered anywhere. The figures of the Jinas are conspicuous by their absence in the reliefs that decorate the cave temples and monasteries of the Udayagiri and the Khandagiri, near Bhuvanesvar in Orissa, the earliest Jain monuments in Eastern India.

The earliest known images of the Jinas have been discovered, not in Eastern India where Vardhamāna Mahāvīra (Vaiśālī), his predecessor Pārśvanātha (Benares), and even the first Jina Ṛishabha (Ayodhyā) are said to have been born, but at Mathura. The oldest images of the Jinas found at Mathura

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are not detached images, but are carved in the centre of stone tablets called *āyāgapaṭa*, tablet of homage, recovered from the Kaṅālī Ṭilā and now exhibited in the Lucknow Museum.[1] These tablets bear votive inscriptions, now more or less damaged, in a variety of the Brāhmī character closely resembling the Brāhmī character used in the inscriptions from Mathura dated in the reign of the Śaka (Scythian) Mahākshatrapa (great Satrap) Śoḍāsa who is assigned to about the beginning of the Christian era. The earliest known figure of the Buddha is carved on a gold casket found in a steatite vase recovered from the relic chamber of a stūpa at Bimaran, a small village six to seven miles west-north-west of Jalalabad in Eastern Afghanistan, and now in the British Museum.[2] The coins found within the vase belong to Azes, the Indo-Scythian king, who reigned in the second half of the first century B.C. The archæologists are at variance over the question whether the gold casket bearing the figure of the Buddha may be assigned to the reign of Azes I. A safer guide for dating the gold casket than coins found in the relic chamber is the form of the Kharoshṭhi letters used in the inscriptions on the steatite vase. Professor Sten Konow writes, "From the point of view of palæography there does not seem to be an objection to the dating of the Bimaran vase as about contemporaneous with the Mathura Lion Capital."[3] In the list of the donors of the Mathura Lion Capital occurs the name of Mahākshatrapa Śudāsa or Śodāsa, son of the Mahākshatrapa Rājula. It may therefore be concluded that the sculptors of Mathura and Gandhara (in which Bimaran is situated) began to carve the images of the Jinas and the Buddha about the same time. The earliest Gandharan figures of the Buddha that may be dated with certainty are those carved on the relic casket of the Kanishka stūpa near Peshawar and dated in the year 1 of Kanishka.[4]

[1] V. A. Smith, *The Jaina Stupa and other antiquities of Mathura*, Allahabad, 1901, plates vii, x, and xi; Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, pl. xix, fig. 71.

[2] Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, fig. 88.

[3] *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. ii, pt. i, "Kharoshṭhi Inscriptions," edited by Sten Konow, Calcutta, 1929, p. 51.

[4] Coomaraswamy, op. cit., fig. 89.

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The oldest images of Gautama Buddha found in the great Buddhist centres of Eastern and Central India—at Śrāvastī, Sarnath and Sāñchī, are of Mathura sandstone and Mathura style, that is to say imported from Mathura, and are mostly dated in the reign of Kanishka and his successors. Therefore it must be admitted that the impulse for making the images of the Buddhas and the Jinas came from West to East—from Gandhara and Mathura to Eastern India, and not vice versa. Before attempting an explanation of this fact, we must determine what an image of the Buddha or the Jina is basically, and what it expresses.

The future Buddha, Gautama, performed *jhāna* or *dhyāna*, meditation, under a rose-apple tree when he was a mere boy; he gained enlightenment by performing *dhyāna*; and, after he became the Enlightened One, the Buddha, his normal occupation was *dhyāna*. He is the *muni*, sage, and according to the *Sutta-Nipāta* (i, 12, 6, and 15) the *muni* is *samāhita* (has his mind concentrated), *jhānarata* (is engaged in meditation), and is the Bhikshu (mendicant) plunged in *dhyāna* in the lonesome wilds. The Buddha who has reached the other shore, who is engaged in *dhyāna* (*jhāyī*), is the true Brāhman (*Sutta-Nipāta*, iii, 9, 29, and 45). The Buddhists recognize four stages of *dhyāna*, and the Jains also recognize four stages of the same practice that they call *śukla* (white) *dhyāna*. In the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali, a text recognized as authoritative by the Brahmanists, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* are classed as the limbs or parts of *yoga* which is also called *dhyāna-yoga*. In the Sanskrit texts *dhyāna* and *yoga* are used as synonymous terms. *Dhyāna* or *yoga* must be performed in certain rigid postures called *āsana*. The usual *āsana*, or posture of sitting for performing *dhyāna*, is called *pallaṅka* in Pali and *palyaṅka* or *paryaṅka* in Sanskrit. It is thus described in the Buddhist texts :—

"Sits down cross-legged, holding the body erect, and sets up his memory in front of (the object of the thought)."

The posture is thus described by Jinasena in the Jain *Ādipurāṇa*, xxii, 60–62 :—

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"Assuming the *palyaṅka* posture (he) should be firmly seated on the earth, holding the body erect and motionless; the left hand, turned upward, should be placed on his own crossed legs, and the right hand should be placed above that in the same manner; he who restrains his mind and is dispassionate should not open his eyes wide, nor close them fully, breathe slowly, and fix one row of his teeth upon another."

There is a vivid description of the *paryaṅka-bandha* or cross-legged posture in Kālidāsa's poem *Kumārasambhava* (iii, 45–7) where the poet describes Śiva engaged in *samādhi*, the highest stage of *dhyāna*. About the eyes of Śiva seated in the *paryaṅka-bandha* posture Kālidāsa writes :—

"With slightly open eyes having motionless bright eyeballs, motionless eyebrows, motionless eyelids, and rays proceeding downward, fixed on the tip of the nose."

Fixing the eyes on the tip of the nose involves partially closing the eyes and is mentioned as one of the elements of the posture of meditation (*dhyāna-yoga*) in the *Bhagavadgītā* (vi, 11–13), the *Vishṇusmṛiti* (xcvii, 1) and the other texts. The *paryaṅka-bandha* (cross-legged) posture is the *yoga* posture *par excellence*. It is also known as the *padmāsana*, lotus posture. The Jain texts also prescribe a standing posture for performing *dhyāna* called the *kāyotsarga* (dedication of the body). Jinasena writes in the *Ādipurāṇa* (xxi, 69) :—

"Like the *paryaṅka* posture, *kāyotsarga* (standing) posture is prescribed for one who is desirous of performing *dhyāna*, (when the) whole body is kept erect and the thirty-two faults avoided."

All seated images of the Jinas, early or late, are in full *paryaṅka* (cross-legged) posture. But in most of the seated images of the Buddha are found variations of the posture. The legs are crossed, the body is held erect, and the eyes are partially closed, but the hands of the Buddha are posed in different ways. In most seated images of the Buddha of the early Mathura school the right

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hand shows the gesture of offering protection and the left hand rests on the left knee.

The origin of the Buddha image has been a subject of keen controversy among archæologists. In this controversy greater emphasis has been laid on the non-essential features of the image —the arrangement of hair, the folds of the drapery, the style of modelling, than on the most essential feature, the posture. To avoid repetition, I shall give both the images of the Jinas and the Buddhas the common designation, image of the Yogi or Dhyānayogī. The early Buddhist monuments of Central and Eastern India referred to above yield ample evidence of the different elements of the popular religion of these areas, the cult of the stūpas or the burial mounds, of the holy trees and symbols, and of images of the Yakshas, the Nāgas, and the Devatās. But the deliberate exclusion of the figures of the Buddhas from the reliefs on these monuments, together with the absence of images of the Jinas, indicates that the cult of the image of the Yogi did not form part of the popular religion of Eastern and Central India before the rise of the Kushan empire. The question that now confronts us is, how could the cult of the images of the Yogi (of the Jinas and the Buddhas) suddenly arise in Mathura and Gandhara about the beginning of the Christian era, and thence gradually spread to the birthplace of Jainism and Buddhism ? The only satisfactory answer to this question that suggests itself is that this sudden rise of the cult of the images of the Yogi in North-Western India is only a revival of an old cult of the image of the Yogi once prevalent in that region. Mathura and Gandhara are the two wings of the Indus Valley. The excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro have brought to light ample evidence to show that the worship of images of human and superhuman beings in *yoga* postures, both seated and standing, prevailed in the Indus Valley in the Chalcolithic period. This evidence consists of seals bearing figures in *yoga* posture attended by votaries, reproduced in Sir John Marshall's *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, plate xii, figs. 13–14, 18–19, 22. One of those seals shows a three-faced male figure

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crowned with a trident,[1] seated erect with the feet crossing each other, and arms outstretched and the thumbs touching the knees. Below the throne on which the deity is seated there are two deer or ibexes looking backward. The deity is attended by four aminals—an elephant, a tiger, a rhinoceros, and a buffalo. Sir John Marshall recognizes in this figure the prototype of Śiva as the great Yogi. Three other seals reproduced on the same plate bear representations of nude tree deities standing erect with arms hanging on sides like the images of the Jinas in the *kāyotsarga* posture, and each attended by a half-kneeling votary and a human-faced bull or goat. Another seal reproduced in plate cxviii, fig. 11, of the same work shows a human being seated in the same posture as the three-faced deity referred to above and attended on either side by a half-kneeling votary above whom a serpent spreads its head.[2] A fragmentary soapstone statuette discovered at Mohenjodaro and of which the head and the left shoulder only are preserved (*Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, plate xcviii) shows another element of the *yoga* posture, eyes fixed on the tip of the nose.

[1] A head crowned with a trident serves as the finial of the horse-shoe gables that decorate the waggon-roof of a monolithic temple of Śiva (now containing an image of Gaṇeśa), at Mahābalipuram in the Chingleput district of the Madras Presidency, assignable to the seventh century A.D. A. H. Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, pt. ii (*Memoirs of the Archæological Survey of India*, No. 33), pp. 29–30, pl. xvi (*a*), (*b*).

[2] Also pl. cxvi, fig. 29.

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Chapter II

FROM KUSHAN ART TO GUPTA ART

THOUGH the beginnings of figure sculpture are involved in obscurity, there are a considerable number of dated documents for reconstructing its history from the beginning of the reign of the great Kushan emperor, Kanishka. As stated above, the inscribed bronze relic casket of the Kanishka stūpa near Peshawar bearing the figures of the Buddha in the round and in relief is dated in the year 1 of Mahārāja Kanishka. This relic casket is a work of the Gandhara School, and the name of the *karmika* or artisan is given as Agisala. Agisala is the Indianized form of the Greek name Agesilaos.[1] The art of Gandhara is the Græco-Roman adaption of an Indian theme and its history runs a course independent of the main current of the history of Indian art. Though the Kushan art of Mathura did not escape its influence, that influence died out with the fall of the Kushan empire. The earliest specimen of the Kushan art of Mathura is the colossal standing image of the Bodhisattva (future Buddha) dedicated by the monk Bala "at Baranasi at the walk of the Lord" (Sarnath) in the third year of Mahārāja Kanishka.[2] The Hellenic character of the Buddha in the Guides' mess at Hoti-Mardan, said by Professor Foucher to be "the most beautiful, and probably also the most ancient of the Buddhas of the Gandhara school", is thus described by him :—

"Your European eyes have in this case no need of the help of any Indianist, in order to appreciate with full knowledge the orb of the nimbus, the waves of the hair, the straightness of the profile, the classical shape of the eyes, the

[1] Sten Konow, *Kharosṭhi Inscriptions*, p. 127.
[2] Coomaraswamy, op. cit., pl. xxii, fig. 83 ; *Archæological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1904–5, pl. xxvi, figs. *a–d*.

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sinuous bow of the mouth, the supple and hollow folds of the draperies."[1]

The head of the Bodhisattva dedicated by Bala is shaved, and the draperies are partially plain and cling to the body, and show deep-cut conventional folds on the left arm and shallow lines on the right thigh. This style of arrangement of the drapery is more closely related to the draperies of the famous colossal statue found at Parkham in the Mathura district and assignable to the second century B.C.[2] and is of indigenous origin. The draperies of some of the seated images of the Buddha produced at Mathura in the Kushan period also show clear Gandhara influence. The dates of the votive inscriptions on a large number of detached images of the Bodhisattva, the Buddha, and the Jinas, found at Mathura, range from the year 3 to the year 98 in the successive reigns of the Kushan emperors, Kanishka (I), Vasishka, Huvishka (Kanishka II reigning simultaneously for some years), and Vāsudeva.[3] There are many others of the same type and style without dated inscriptions. In the Indian Sculpture Room of the British Museum are exhibited five fragments of images of the Jinas without drapery, from Mathura, assignable to the same period. The collection includes the bust of a Jina, the lower part of another Jina seated in the cross-legged posture, and three Jina heads. To the century (i.e. second century) covered by the dated series of Jain and Buddhist images should be added another (first century A.D.) that preceded the accession of Kanishka and during which the earliest images of the Jinas were produced. During these two centuries the sculptors of Mathura made considerable progress in technique, but their works possess little artistic merit. The faces of the Buddha and the Jinas with partially closed eyes do not express any psychological meaning, do not show the mind absorbed in meditation

[1] A. Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and other Essays*, English translation, Paris and London, 1917, p. 120.

[2] Vogel, *Catalogue of the Archæological Museum at Mathura*, Allahabad, 1910, p. 83, pl. xii.

[3] Lüders' *List of Brahmi Inscriptions*, Nos. 12, 16–77, 161, 918, 925–7, 1354, 1355, 1357, 1363, 1364, 1365, 1366, 1373, 1374, 1377, 1420.

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(*dhyāna* and *samādhi*). The nude figure of the Jinas and the partially nude figures of the Buddhas with clinging draperies in most cases lack vitality, volume, and weight, and the gestures of the Buddhist images do not show movement.

The failure of the sculptors of the early school of Mathura to endow their figures with life and meaning was due not simply to their inability to manage the materials, but to additional hindrances inherent in Indian religious figure art. One of these hindrances is the natural stiffness of the postures of *yoga*. In the sitting posture the legs are crossed—a difficult pose—and the rest of the body—head, neck, and chest—is held erect. In the standing *kāyotsarga* posture the whole body is held erect and the arms hang down. Infusion of life into figures in such postures is unusually difficult, and movement is out of the question. All the images of the Jinas are in one or other of these postures. In the images of the Buddha the postures are slightly varied by some mild and simple movement of the right hand, such as offering protection, and by the left hand either holding the hem of the upper garment or resting on the left thigh (in seated figures) or on the left hip (in standing figures).

Another limiting condition of the Indian figure sculpture is that it is in medium relief. These sculptures were primarily designed to serve as architectural ornaments and not self-contained works of art. The interior of the ancient Indian temple is dark and the cult image installed therein is intended to inspire the worshipper with a sense of awe and mystery and is therefore only partially visible. The bulk of the Indian figure sculpture which was meant to stand the full light of day is subservient to architecture and intended to be fixed in the niches of the temples or stūpas. But though these sculptures are not, strictly speaking, in three dimensions, they show in their developed stage, as pointed out by Roger Fry, " an extraordinary grasp of three dimensional form." [1]

A third limiting condition is the Hindu conception of the beauty of the human form. Like the Greek sculptors the Indian sculptors

[1] Roger Fry, *The Arts of Painting and Sculpture*, London, 1932, p. 88.

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also endeavoured to create beautiful human form. But their idea of the beauty of the human form is different from the Greek ideal. With the Indian the form that is auspicious, but not necessarily pleasing to the eyes, is beautiful. The figure of the *Mahāpurusha* (Superman) characterized by thirty-two signs is the ideal of human beauty. Two careers lie open to a *Mahāpurusha* according to the Buddhist texts; universal dominion, or Buddhahood. The Buddhas and the Jinas were all *Mahāpurushas*, and, according to the *Chaitanyacharitāmṛita*, biography of the Bengali saint Chaitanya who flourished early in the sixteenth century A.D., he also possessed the signs of the *Mahāpurusha* (book i, 3, 40–44). These are some of the signs of the *Mahāpurusha* :—

(1) He hath feet with level tread.
(2) Beneath, on the soles of his feet, wheels appear thousand-spoked, with tyre and hub.
(3) He hath projecting heels.
(4) He hath long fingers and toes.
(5) Soft and tender hands and feet.
(7) His ankles are like rounded shells.
(8) His legs are like an antelope's.
(9) Standing and without bending he can touch and rub his knees with either hand.
(12) His skin is so delicately smooth that no dust cleaves to his body.
(14) The down on his body turns upward, every hair of it, blue-black in colour like eye-paint, in little curling rings, curling to the right.
(15) He hath a frame divinely straight.
(17) The front half of his body is like a lion's (with narrow waist).
(18) There is no furrow between his shoulders.
(20) His bust is equally rounded.
(21) His jaws are as a lion's.
(22) His eyes are intensely blue.
(30) He hath eyelashes like a cow's.
(31) Between the eyebrows appears a hairy mole white and like soft cotton down.
(32) His head is like a royal turban. [1]

[1] T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, pt. iii, London, 1921, pp. 137–9.

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This list of the signs of the *Mahāpurusha* found in the Buddhist texts is evidently borrowed from astrology. No textbook of astrology has come down to us, containing lists of auspicious and inauspicious signs of man and woman, older than Varāhamihira's *Bṛihatsaṁhitā*, a work composed in the sixth century A.D. But *Bṛihatsaṁhitā* is based on earlier works. The following are the auspicious signs of the body of man according to Varāhamihira (lxviii, 2–56) :—

"Feet not sweaty, hued like the calix of lotus, warm, carved like a tortoise's back, with soft soles, connected toes, bright and red nails, well-shaped heels and no projecting ankles, are those of monarch. Kings have rounded legs with rare, thin hairs, and excellent thighs similar to an elephant's trunk, and fleshy, equal knees. One who has a waist like a lion's is a ruler of men. Wealthy men have a smooth belly. The flanks (*pārśva*) of rich men are even or fleshy. The middle of the belly (*kukshā*) of the wealthy man is even. Kings have elevated middle part of the belly. Kings and happy men have thick fleshy and low nipples. Wealthy men have smooth breasts; heroes thick chests. One whose neck is marked with three folds like shells is a king. Such (shoulders) as are broad, unbroken and well-knit, (are proper) to those who possess happiness and valour. Arms like an elephant's trunk, round, hanging down to the knees, even and thick, are proper to lords of the earth. Long are the fingers of a long-living man. Kings are possessed with wrists concealed, not loose, and well-knit joints. Rich men have fleshy chins. The mouth of the king is pleasing, close, pure, delicate smooth. Full lovely face of wealthy men."[1]

It will be seen that most of the physical traits of the *Mahāpurusha* quoted from the Buddhist texts, with the exception of abnormal features like the wheel beneath the sole, the mole between the eyebrows, and the *ushṇīsha* or bump on the head, are included in this list of auspicious signs of man. It will also

[1] English translation by Kern, slightly revised. *Verspreide Geschrifton ouder Zijutorezich Verzameld*, vol. ii.

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be seen that a pretty face finds a prominent place among the auspicious signs of man in Varāhamihira's list. Varāhamihira devotes a separate chapter to the signs of women. I shall quote a few lines (lxx, 2–5) :—

"Of good augury are feet marked with fishes, hooks, lotuses, barly-corns, thunderbolts, ploughs and swords; sweaty and soft in the soles. So, too, legs are not hairy, without prominent veins, and quite round. Broad, plump and heavy hips to support the girdle, and navel deep, large and turned to the right, are held of good omen in women. A middle with three folds and not hairy; breasts round, close to each other, equal and hard; a bosom devoid of hair and soft, and a neck marked with three lines, bring wealth and joys."

According to Varāhamihira these auspicious signs characterize *ākṛiti*, the beautiful figure, which not only brings good luck, but is also the root of moral excellence. He writes (lxx, 23) :—

"Generally speaking, vices will be found with the ugly women, whereas virtues reside in one who has a handsome appearance."

As the early Buddhists and the Jains of Eastern India did not cause images of Gautama the Buddha and Mahāvīra the Jina to be made, no traditions relating to the likeness of these saints could survive in their native land. When the Buddhists and Jains of Mathura grafted the cult of the images of the Yogi on Buddhism and Jainism which lacked that element in their earlier stages, and when the sculptors of Mathura undertook to make their images, the type they evolved was a conventional combination of all the auspicious signs. The directions of the canon regarding the signs of the *Mahāpurusha* prevented them from seeking direct inspiration from nature.

Thus handicapped, figure art made little progress under the great Kushan kings. As we have seen, the latest dated image of the Kushan period is dated in the year 98 in the reign of Mahārāja Rājātirāja Vāsudeva. If we take A.D. 120 as the initial

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year of the era of Kanishka, this date will correspond to A.D. 218. The dated image next in order of time is the Bodh-Gaya image of the Bodhisattva of the year 64 of Mahārāja Trikamala.[1] The characters used in the votive inscription on the base of this image closely resemble the characters of the Allahabad Asoka Pillar inscription of Samudragupta known as the Eastern variety of the Gupta script. The year 64 should, therefore, be assigned to the Gupta Era corresponding to A.D. 383–4. Thus an interval of at least over 160 years separated this Bodh-Gaya image from the last dated image of the Kushan period. The stone used in making this image is the red sandstone of Mathura, and a comparison with the Katra image [2] in the Mathura Museum bearing a votive inscription in Kushan script shows that it is also in Mathura style. Both these images are seated cross-legged (*paryaṅka-bandha*) and the arms of the Bodh-Gaya image when complete were evidently posed in the same fashion as the Katra image. Like the drapery of the Katra image, the drapery of the Bodh-Gaya image is plain and clings to the body on the breast and the lower part, but shows conventional folds on the left shoulder and the left fore-arm. The head of the Katra image is shaved, and the *ushṇiṣha* or bump is covered by a lock of hair curling around it like a conch shell. The Bodh-Gaya image has on the head the hair of a *Mahāpurusha* disposed in little curling rings, curling to the right. Some of the Buddha and the Jina images of the Kushan period from Mathura also show this type of hair on the head.[3] But if, from the type, we turn to the artistic character the transformation appears to be miraculous. The half-shut eyes of the Katra image are vacant and the figure lacks substance and weight. Though the left eye of the Bodh-Gaya image is damaged, the right eye which is fixed on the tip of the nose and the face clearly express the state of the mind, absorption in deep meditation, *dhyāna*. The Buddhists, as already stated, distinguish four stages of *dhyāna*. In the *Samaññaphala*

[1] Cunningham, *Mahabodhi*, pl. xxv; *Archæological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1922–3, p. 69, pl. xxxviii (*a*).
[2] Vogel, *Catalogue, etc.*, pl. vii.
[3] Ibid., pl. xvi; *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. x, pl. ii (facing p. 111).

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Sutta of the *Dīghanikāya* (2) and in other texts Gautama Buddha thus defines these stages :—

"Then estranged from lusts, aloof from evil dispositions, he enters into and remains in the First *dhyāna*—a state of joy and ease born of detachment, reasoning and investigation going on awhile."

"Then further, O King, the Bhikshu, suppressing all reasoning and investigation, enters into and abides in the Second *dhyāna* —a state of joy and ease, born of the security of concentration, when no reasoning or investigation goes on—a state of elevation of mind, a tranquillization of the heart within.

"Then further, O King, the Bhikshu, holding aloof from joy, becomes equable; and mindful and self-possessed he experiences in his body that ease which the Arhats talk of when they say: 'The man serene and self-possessed is well at ease,' and so he enters into and abides in the Third *dhyāna*.

"Then further, O King, the Bhikshu, by the putting away alike of ease and of pain, by the passing away alike of any elation, and dejection, he had previously felt, enters into and abides in the Fourth *dhyāna*, a state of pure self-possession and equanimity, without pain and without ease." (Rhys Davids.)

The *dhyāna* is not only a state of the mind; every stage of it also permeates the whole body. It is stated in the same text regarding one abiding in the First *dhyāna* :—

"His very body does he so pervade, drench, permeate, and suffuse with the joy of ease born of detachment, that there is no spot in his whole frame not suffused therewith."

Similarly it is said that "the joy and ease born of concentration" (*samādhi*) must pervade the whole body of one abiding in the Second *dhyāna*; "ease that has no joy with it" must permeate the body of one abiding in the Third *dhyāna*; and "sense of purification, of translucence of heart" must permeate the whole body of one abiding in the Fourth *dhyāna*.

The sculptor has succeeded in endowing the Bodh-Gaya

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image of the year A.D. 383-4 with the greatest measure of spiritual significance—in suffusing it with the feeling of *dhyāna*. But he has not neglected the material side. The image conveys the sense of the round and shows solidity and weight.

In the absence of dated specimens the transformation from the seated Katra image to the Bodh-Gaya image appears sudden. But it is possible to follow the intermediate stages of this transformation in the case of standing images. The series of fully draped figures of the standing Buddha (the outer garment covering both the shoulders) starts with image A. 4 in the Mathura Museum, rightly assigned to the Kushan Period.[1] The folds of the drapery of this image are indicated by rhythmic lines, but the image itself of which the feet are missing lacks both spiritual and material significance.

The next stage in the development of this type of standing image is marked by two standing images of the Buddha from Mathura in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.[2] In both cases the Buddha stands quite erect in the *kāyotsarga* posture, but the left hand holds the hem of the outer garment and the right hand, now lost, must have been offering protection. The eyes of both these images are fixed on the tip of the nose, but the faces lack the feeling of *dhyāna*. The draperies, marked by rhythmic conventional lines in slight relief, do not hide the figure underneath, but allow it to appear by clinging to the body. The massiveness of the shoulders, the roundness of the arms, and the breadth of the chest are clearly revealed through the transparent clinging garment, but the artists have failed to do justice to the thighs and legs which look like a pair of posts.

The standing Buddha A. 5 in the Mathura Museum, dedicated, according to the votive inscription on the base in Gupta character of the fifth century, by the Śākyan (Buddhist) monk Yasadinna (Yasodatta), marks a step in advance.[3] The face of this image

[1] Vogel, *Catalogue*, p. 49, pl. xv*a*.

[2] *Archæological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1922–3, pl. xxxix (*a*) and (*c*).

[3] Vogel, *Catalogue*, pp. 49–50, pl. ix; *Archæological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1922–3, pl. xxxix (*b*); Coomaraswamy, op. cit., pl. xl, fig. 158.

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with eyes fixed on the tip of the nose shows absorption in deep meditation (*dhyāna*). But the body is rendered in nearly the same style as the two other images of the standing Buddha described above.

The figure art of Mathura reaches its culmination in the image of the standing Buddha A. 8 in the Mathura Museum (Plate IV).[1] The head and the feet of this image are unfortunately lost. The Buddha does not stand quite erect in the *kāyotsarga* posture, but the torso is slightly bent to the left and the figure is enlivened by restrained movement. The girdle fastening the lower garment is skilfully shown through the transparent outer garment. Roundness, solidity, weight—in fact all that give meaning to the form are found in abundance in this headless figure of the standing Buddha. In the Indian figure art as fully developed in the Gupta period the formal meaning is subordinated to the psychological or spiritual meaning; but the human figure as a whole, the nude form, receives due attention. Movement cannot be expected in figures seated or standing in the posture of *dhyāna-yoga*. But in the slightly inclined standing figures of the Buddha of the Gupta period, offering boon or protection with the right hand, a peculiar type of movement, movement under restraint, is interpreted.

[1] Vogel, *Catalogue*, p. 51.

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Chapter III

GUPTA SCULPTURES FROM SARNATH

SIDDHĀRTHA Gautama, the Bodhisattva or the future Buddha, was the son of Suddhodana, a chief of the Śākya clan of the Kshatriya caste residing at Kapilavastu the site of which town is now marked by Rumindei in the Nepal Terai. The early life of Siddhārtha is thus described in some of the oldest Pali dialogues of the Buddha :—

"In the days before my Enlightenment, when as yet I was but a Boddhisattva without full Enlightenment, I bethought me that a hole-and-corner life is all a home can give, whereas a wandering mendicant is free as air ; it is hard for the home-keeping man to follow the higher life in all its completeness and purity and perfection ; come let me cut off hair and beard, don the yellow robe and go forth from home to homelessness. So the time came that, while I was quite young—with a wealth of coal-black hair untouched by grey and in all the beauty of my early prime—despite the wishes of my parents, who wept and lamented—I cut off my hair and beard, donned the yellow robes and went forth from home as a wandering mendicant." [1]

As a wandering mendicant the Bodhisattva sought instruction and guidance first from Ālāra Kālāma and then from Udraka Rāmaputra, and, being dissatisfied, went through Magadha (South Bihar) to Uruvelā (Uruvilva), modern Bodh-Gaya, near Gaya in Bihar. At Uruvelā he practised austerities for six years, according to the later sources, till his body grew emaciated in the extreme. The Bodhisattva then thought to himself :—

"Yet, with all these severe austerities, I fail to transcend ordinary human limits and to rise to the heights of noblest

[1] Lord Chalmers, *Further Dialogues of Buddha*, vol. i, p. 115 ; vol. ii, p. 122.

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understanding and vision. Could there be another path to Enlightenment ?

" A memory came to me of how once, seated in the cool shade of a rose-apple tree on the lands of my father the Sakyan, I, divested of pleasures of sense and of wrong states of mind, entered upon, and abode in, the first *jhāna* (*dhyāna*), with all its zest and satisfaction—a state bred of inward aloofness but not divorced from observation and reflection. Could this be the path of Enlightenment ? In prompt response to this memory, my consciousness told me that here lay the true path of Enlightenment.

" Thought I to myself :—It is no easy matter to attain that bliss with a body so emaciated. Come let me take solid food, rice and junket ; and this I ate accordingly." [1]

When the Bodhisattva was engaged in practising austerities, five monks attended on him waiting to hear the truth that he would attain. When they saw that the Bodhisattva abandoned the struggle and began to take luxurious food regularly, they left him in disgust. Restored to health the Bodhisattva one day sat under an Asvattha or Pipal tree in the *paryaṅka* posture (cross-legged) with the determination, " Let my body dry up on this seat, let my skin, bone and flesh decay, this body will not move from this seat till I have gained Enlightenment that is difficult to gain through many millions of years."

Seated underneath the holy Pipal tree the Bodhisattva performed in succession the four *dhyānas*, defeated the tempter Māra and his host, and became Enlightened (Buddha), or fully Enlightened (Sambuddha), in course of the night. Thus attaining Buddhahood, Gautama Buddha spent four (or seven) weeks at Uruvelā seated in the *paryaṅka* posture (cross-legged) under different trees " enjoying the bliss of emancipation ". Then, at the solicitation, it is said, of Brahmā Sahampati, the greatest of the gods, the Buddha decided to preach the doctrine. " To

[1] Lord Chalmers, *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*, vol. i, pp. 176–7.

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whom shall I preach the doctrine first? Who will understand the doctrine easily?" the Buddha thought within himself. His former teachers, Ālāra Kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra, had already died. The Buddha then decided to preach the doctrine first to the five Bhikshus who had attended on him at Uruvelā and who were then dwelling at Ṛishipatana Mṛigadāva (Deer Park) near Benares. The Buddha left Uruvelā, and, wandering from place to place, came to the Deer Park, modern Sarnath. There, to his old companions the Buddha preached his first sermon known as Starting of the Wheel of Law (*Dharma-chakrapravartana*). In one of the oldest Pali Buddhist dialogues, the *Mājjhima Nikaya*, 26, the Buddha, speaking of his interviews with the five monks at Sarnath, says :—

"I succeeded in convincing the Five. I instructed two of their number, while the three other went abroad for alms; and what those three brought back from their round, maintained all six of us. Or, I instructed three, while two went abroad for alms; and what these two brought back from their round, maintained all six of us." [1]

The residence of the Buddha after his first sermon at Sarnath was probably the first Buddhist monastery. The monumental history of Sarnath begins with a stūpa or burial mound enshrining the relics of the Buddha and a magnificent pillar crowned by the Wheel of Law erected by Asoka. The excavations, carried on by the Archæological Survey of India at the site, have brought to light abundant remains of Mauryan and Śuṅga monuments among which the figure of the Śākya saint either as the Bodhisattva or as the Buddha finds no place. The earliest image of the Śākya saint found at Sarnath is the over-life size standing Bodhisattva of the Mathura school referred to above (p. 11) erected by the monk Bala at the walk of the Bhagavat in the year 3 of Mahārāja Kanishka. In this act of dedication Bala associates with himself not only his parents, his teachers, his

[1] Lord Chalmers, *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*, vol. i, p. 123.

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companions and pupils, and a learned nun ("who knows the Tripiṭaka") named Buddhamitrā, but also the *Kshatrapa* (Satrap) Vanaspara and Kharapallāna. This monk Bala is named as the donor of an image of the Bodhisattva of the same style and size erected at Śrāvasti at the walk of the Lord, found at Saheth-Maheth in the Gonda District in Oudh and now exhibited in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.[1] Beside the material and the style of these two images of the Bodhisattva dedicated by Bala, there are evidences to establish the connection of the donor with Mathura. In the votive inscription [2] on the Bodhisattva image found at the Chaubārā mound, Mathura (now deposited in the Lucknow Provincial Museum), dedicated in the year 33 in the reign of Mahārāja Devaputra Huvishka, the donor, the nun Dhanavatī, calls herself the sister's daughter of the nun Buddhamitrā, "who knows the Tripiṭaka," and who (Buddhamitrā) in turn is called the female pupil of the monk Bala, "who knows the Tripiṭaka." This Buddhamitrā is undoubtedly the same learned nun Buddhamitrā associated with the Bala in the votive inscription of the Sarnath image. The outlandish names of the Satraps Vanaspara and Kharapallāna named in the votive inscription on the Sarnath image and their outlandish official title *Kshatrapa*, Satrap, indicate that they came from the North-West and evidently held office under the Kushan imperial government.

The image of the Bodhisattva installed at Sarnath by the monk Bala from Mathura revolutionized the artistic history of Eastern India. Probably not long after, local artists were commissioned to make images, in imitation, of local material, Chunar sandstone.[3] It is possible to trace the growth of a school of figure art at Benares, step by step, beginning with frank imitation of the Kushan model from Mathura and culminating in an independent type with plain transparent draperies, showing the nude figure, in the fifth century A.D.

[1] Lüders, *List*, Nos. 918–19.
[2] Ibid., No. 38.
[3] *Archæological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1904–5, p. 79, pl. xxvic.

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Four typical images of the Buddha of the Gupta period from Sarnath, transferred from the India Museum in 1880, are exhibited in the Indian Sculpture Room of the British Museum. Earliest in date among these four is a life size (59·5 × 19 inches) standing image of the Buddha (Plate V). The Buddha stands erect in rigid *kāyotsarga* posture. But, unlike images of the Jinas in this posture, the arms of the Buddha do not hang on the sides, but the right hand is raised and shows the gesture of offering protection, while the left hand holds the hem of the upper garment. To determine the place of this image in the history of the figure art of the Benares branch of the Gupta school it should be compared, on the one hand, with three standing images of the Buddha discovered by Mr. Hargreaves at Sarnath in 1914–15,[1] the votive inscription on one of which is dated in the year 154 of the Gupta Era (A.D. 473–4) and the votive inscriptions on the two others dated in the year 157 of the Gupta Era (A.D. 476–7), and, on the other hand, with three images from Mathura reproduced in the *Annual Report of the Archæological Survey of India*, 1922–3, plate xxxix *a–c*, and with the one here reproduced in Plate IV. Not only the material of our image, Chunar sandstone, but the plain draperies whereon the folds are not marked in any way, indicates its place of origin. Unlike other standing Buddha images from Sarnath, but like those from Mathura, this image shows the girdle that fastens the under garment to the loin, though the transparent outer garment over the girdle is barely perceptible. The nearness of this image to the Mathura prototype indicates its early date. The half-shut eyes appear to be looking inward and the face wears the expression of meditation. The disposition of the eyes indicates that this image should be assigned to a date earlier than the seated Bodhisattva of the year A.D. 383–4, of which the eyes are almost closed to show the direction of the gaze towards the tip of the nose. The shoulders of this standing Buddha are not quite rounded and massive like the shoulders of the images of the Gupta period from Mathura, but flat. The lower half of the figure, the thighs and legs, lack

[1] *Archæological Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1914–15, pl. lxiii *a–d*.

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softness and grace, the knee-joints are awkward, and the lower parts of the legs left bare below the draperies are disproportionately long.

The other standing image of the Buddha of the Gupta period from Sarnath exhibited in the British Museum is much smaller in size (31 × 13·5 inches). It is in high relief. The face shows deep meditation. But the Buddha does not stand in erect (*kāyotsarga*) posture, but in an easier posture with the upper part of the body slightly inclined towards the left. The figure is full of life and appears to have just walked out of the stone. The right hand is damaged and the left hand holds the hem of the outer garment. On the base are two worshippers, evidently the donor and his wife. The graceful flying Vidyādharas at the top of the back slab add an element of movement to the composition.

Two seated images of the Buddha of the Gupta period from Sarnath are also exhibited in the Indian Sculpture Room. One of these (19·5 × 13·5 inches) is seated in the cross-legged (*paryaṅka*) posture with the left hand resting on the lap, and the right hand touching the earth. This gesture illustrates a well-known miraculous event narrated in the *Lalitavistara* [1] (Sanskrit) and the *Nidānakathā* (Pali). When the future Buddha sat down cross-legged under the Pipal tree at Uruvelā determined not to get up till he had gained Enlightenment, Māra, the Evil One, began his attacks on him in order to prevent him from gaining that end. When all his efforts failed, Māra asked the Bodhisattva :—

" ' Siddhārtha, who is witness that thou hast given alms ? '

" The Bodhisattva answered, ' I have in this place no living witness at all. But not counting the alms I have given in other births, let this great solid earth, unconscious though it be, be witness to the seven hundredfold great alms I gave when I was born as Viśvantara ! '

" And withdrawing his right hand from beneath his robe, he stretched it forth towards the earth, and said, ' Are you, or

[1] Chapter xxi.

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are you not witness of the seven hundredfold great gift I gave in my birth as Viśvantara ? '

" And the great earth uttered a voice, saying, ' I am witness to thee of that ! ' " [1]

Then the army of Māra fled in all directions. This miracle happened before sunset, and the Bodhisattva gained *bodhi* or *sambodhi*, omniscience, and became the Buddha, the Enlightened One, in course of the night. The seated image of the Buddha touching the earth with the right hand symbolizes the Enlightenment of the Buddha. The stiff cross-legged *yoga* posture is not in harmony with even the mild movement of the hand involved in calling the earth to bear witness, and *dhyāna* or meditation with eyes fixed on the tip of the nose is not in harmony with an altercation with Māra. This lack of vital harmony more or less characterizes all Buddhist images with the exception of those that are in perfect *yoga* posture.

The other seated image from Sarnath is not seated cross-legged, but in a natural posture called *bhadrāsana* on a throne with the legs falling down and the feet resting on the ground below (Plate VI, 45 × 20·5 inches). The smooth face, unbroken shoulders, even and smooth chest and belly, and perfectly round arms, thighs, and legs are endowed with the softness and warmth of flesh. The length of the forearms of the Buddha adds emphasis to the slimness, a common character of the Gupta figure sculpture of the Benares school. Yet this slim figure, seated on the throne with feet resting on the ground, convincingly suggests weight and, in pleasant contrast to the upper half of the figure, the thighs and legs suggest volume. But there is no lack of plastic harmony between the two halves. The very graceful hands of the Buddha touch each other in front of the breast showing a gesture that is known as the gesture of explanation (*vyākhyānamudrā*) and also as the gesture of reasoning (*vitarkamudrā*). The eyes of the Buddha, looking downward, are not looking at the audience, and the whole figure reveals a mind engaged in reasoning and deliberation with concentration. This state of the mind is said

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Birth Stories*, London, 1880, p. 101.

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to be the result of abiding in the first *dhyāna* when, withdrawn from pleasures of sense and sinful evil thoughts, it enjoys satisfaction and pleasure derived from detachment (*vivekaja*) accompanied by reasoning (*savitarka*) and deliberation (*savichāra*). Though full of spiritual meaning, this figure lacks that spiritual intensity which in other images of the Buddha and the Jinas suggest mystic significance.

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Chapter IV

THE INDO-ARYAN AND THE DRAVIDIAN BRAHMANIC IMAGES

HITHERTO we have dealt with the images of the Buddha and the Jinas only, all human beings, who gained omniscience (*bodhi* or *kevala* knowledge) by performing *dhyāna*. In the Gupta period the Indians began to make images of the Mahāyāna Buddhist and the Brāhmanic gods and goddesses. The Mahāyāna gods and goddesses—the divine Bodhisattvas, and Tārā and other goddesses, are all subordinate to the Buddhas, for all Buddhists, and their images are of course animated by the spirit of *dhyāna* that leads to Enlightenment and also betokens Enlightenment.

Unlike the Buddhas and the Jinas, the great Brāhmanic gods, Brahmā, Vishṇu, and Śiva whose images are worshipped, have a dual character. In turn they are both creator and created, immortal as well as mortal, that is to say liable to die at the time of *pralaya*, cosmic dissolution. For understanding the spirit of the images of these gods, it is necessary to grasp clearly this dual character. The evidence found in the great epics, the *Mahābhārata* including the *Harivaṁsa* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* relating to the dual character of Brahmā is thus summed up by Hopkins :—

" The cosmic myth derives even Brahman (Brahmā) from the golden egg and philosophy has him born of Ātman, a theory united with that of the birth from Vishṇu's navel. Vasishṭha addresses Brahman (Brahmā) as ' born of the egg ', ' born of the lotus, god of gods, saviour of the world '. The egg-theory is repudiated in a speech ascribed to the Wind god ; ' How can he who is unborn be born of an egg ? The egg means space ; thence only was the Great Father born. There is no (cosmic)

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egg; but Brahman (Brahmā) is; he is the King, the enlivener (creator) of the world!'"[1]

The dual character of Brahmā consists in his being both "unborn" and "self-born", as well as "born of the egg" and "born of the lotus". In the following stanza of the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* (vi, 17) Brahmā is said to have been created:—

> "To Him who of old creates Brahmā,
> And who verily delivers to him the Vedas—
> To the God, who is lighted by his own intellect,
> Do I, being desirous of liberation, resort as shelter."[2]

With Brahmā is connected a group of heavens called the Brahma-world or the Brahma-worlds which occupy a very prominent place in the Upanishadic and the Buddhist cosmogony. According to the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, iv, 3, 31, the Brahma-world is the most blissful of the heavens that may be won by man. In the same Upanishad it is said (iv, 4, 23), one who sees the soul in the soul, who sees everything as the soul, wins the Brahma-world. Again (vi, 3, 15), those who adopt the path of the gods (*devayāna*) and worship in the forest Truth with faith are ultimately conducted to the Brahma-worlds. "In those Brahma-worlds they dwell for long. Of these there is no return" (i.e. rebirth). In the concluding passage of the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* (viii, 15) it is said, "He who studies the Vedas as a student as well as a householder, who concentrates his senses upon the Soul (Ātman), and who causes no injury to animals except at sacrifices reaches the Brahma-world and does not return hither again—yea, he does not return hither again."

According to the early Buddhist texts Gautama Buddha opposed the view that there is no return or rebirth for one who reaches the Brahma-worlds. In the Brahmanic literature only one god, Hiraraṇygarbha, Golden Germ, bears the name Brahmā, meaning God. But the Buddhists use the term in

[1] E. W. Hopkins, "Epic Mythology" (*Encyclopædia of Indian Aryan Research*, iii, Band i, Heft B), Strassburg, 1915, p. 191 (references to chapters and verses are omitted).

[2] English translation by R. E. Hume.

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the sense of a class of gods each reigning in his particular heaven. Three of these Brahmās are given prominence in the Pali texts—Brahmā Sahampati, Baka Brahmā, and Brahmā Sanamkumāra. In the *Mājjhima Nikāya*, 49, the Buddha says :—

" While I was staying once at Ukaṭṭha in the Subhaga grove under the great śāl-tree, Baka the Brahmā conceived the pernicious view that his world was everlasting, permanent, eternal, complete in itself, with no rebirth thence ; that in his world there was no birth, decay, death, rebirth thence, or further existences, nor was there any other salvation beyond it. Reading his thoughts I vanished from beneath that śāl-tree to reappear in his particular Brahma-world." [1]

Baka Brahmā was not as compliant as his colleague, Sahampati, who requested Gautama Buddha to preach his doctrine to men. But the Buddhist criticism of the Upanishadic doctrine of non-return from the Brahma-worlds was not without effect. In the *Vedāntasūtras*, iv, 3, 7–9, it is stated that the Brahmā of the Brahma-worlds to whom, according to the Upanishads, the followers of the path of the gods (*devayāna*) are led, is the personal Brahman (masculine) or Brahmā, and not the all-pervading Brahman (neuter) or Brahmā. It is also admitted (iv, 3, 10–11) that the Brahma-worlds, like other worlds, will perish at the time of the *pralaya* or cosmic dissolution. But the dwellers of the Brahma-world with Brahmā himself will not be reborn when the world will come into being again, but gain knowledge of the impersonal Brahmā and be absorbed in it. Saṁkara calls this doctrine of final liberation *krama-mukti* " gradual liberation ". It finds support in the following stanzas of the Muṇḍaka-Upanishad (iii, 2, 6) :—

> " They who have ascertained the Vedānta-knowledge,
> Ascetics with natures purified through the application of renunciation,
> They in the Brahma-world at the end of time (*parāntakāle*)
> Are all liberated beyond death." (Hume.)

[1] Lord Chalmers, *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*, vol. i, p. 234.

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The conception of gradual liberation after residence in the Brahma-worlds through knowledge of the all-pervading Brahmā places these worlds on a separate footing from other heavens conceived by man. The Brahma-worlds are not abodes of eternal bliss, but places of striving (*sādhana*) for gaining that supreme knowledge that alone can enable one to escape from rebirth after the dissolution of the creation. Brahmā, the lord of the Brahma-world, is also engaged in the same striving, for his normal term of life comes to an end at the time of cosmic dissolution (*pralaya*), and he, therefore, also is a seeker of final liberation. Therefore, like all other seekers of liberation through knowledge, *dhyāna* must be the normal occupation of Brahmā, and his image must show that he is engaged in *dhyāna*. Hemādri quotes a passage from the *Vishṇudharmottara* in his *Chaturvargachintāmaṇi* (*Vratakhaṇḍa*)[1] compiled between A.D. 1270–1280, which contains these directions for making the image of Brahmā :—

"A learned artist should make Brahmā four-faced, four-armed, having matted locks of hair, seated in the locked lotus posture (*vaddhapadmāsana*, cross-legged), riding on a chariot drawn by seven geese, wearing black antelope's skin and full set of ornaments, holding a garland of beads in the right upper hand and water-pot in the lower, the face having all the auspicious marks and eyes closed in *dhyāna*."

The *vaddhapadmāsana*, lotus-posture, as already pointed out, is the same as the *paryaṅka-vandha* posture. There is only one little variation. Instead of eyes fixed on the tip of the nose, here eyes are directed to be closed in *dhyāna* (*dhyāna-sammilitekshaṇaḥ*). So, iconographically, Brahmā is but the Buddha or the Jina with three additional heads, and two additional hands holding attributes.

Vishṇu and Śiva have also the same dual character as Brahmā. According to their special votaries they not only are creators, preservers, and destroyers, but also practise asceticism and *yoga*.

[1] *Chaturvargachintāmaṇi*, vol. ii; *Vratakhaṇḍa*, pt. i, chap. i (*Bibliotheca Indica*).

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In the most authoritative Upanishads and the Pāli Buddhist texts Vishṇu and Śiva occupy an inferior position, inferior not only to Brahmā and Prajāpati, but also to Indra. They come into prominence and, with Brahmā, form the Brāhmanic triad in the epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the Purāṇas. Vishṇu is not only the lord of Vaikuṇṭha, consort of Lakshmī, and destroyer of many Asuras (demons), he is also identical with the impersonal Brahmā. At one time, supporting himself on one leg only, Vishṇu practised asceticism and *yoga* for ten thousand years (*Harivaṁsa*, 218). He is called a great Yogi (Mahāyogi). In one hymn it is said of Vishṇu that he created the world as a Yogi only with the help of knowledge and again began to practise *yoga* (*Harivaṁsa*, 263, 373). Vishṇu is known in four primary forms (*vyūhas*), Vāsudeva, Saṁkarshaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, twenty-four ordinary, and certain extraordinary forms, and also incarnated in many forms. Hemādri in his work referred to above quotes descriptions of all forms of Vishṇu from the *Vishṇudharmottara*, *Viśvakarmaśāstra*, and *Siddhārthasaṁhitā* as known in the thirteenth century A.D. In some of these forms Vishṇu is also made to perform *dhyāna*. The Buddha is one of the incarnations of Vishṇu and in the Brāhmanic texts he is made to sit in the lotus-posture (*padmāsanastha*) engaged in meditation (*dhyāyī*). There is also a form of the boar incarnation of Vishṇu that is engaged in *dhyāna*. It is stated in the *Vishṇudharmmottara*, "Or the man-boar should be made as engaged in *dhyāna* like Kapila." Kapila, the founder of the Sāṁkhya system, is one of the incarnations of Vishṇu. Pradyumna is one of the four primary forms (Vyūhas) of Vishṇu. It is said of Kapila in the same work, "Know that Pradyumna urged by the spirit of renunciation assumed the form Kapila" who is described as "seated in the lotus posture (*padmāsana*) with eyes closed in meditation (*dhyāna-sammilitekshaṇaḥ*)". One particular form of Vishṇu, Yogeśvara, master of *yoga*, is particularly recommended for worship by those who seek final liberation. The image of Yogeśvara is thus described in an extract from the *Viśvakarmaśāstra* :—

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"Seated in the lotus posture (*padmāsana*) on a white lotus, with slightly opened eyes fixed on the tip of the nose, the (lower) left and the right hands turned upwards and placed one upon another on the lap, a lotus and a great club placed by the side of these hands, holding the *Pāñchajanya* conch shell and the *Sudarśana* discus in the upper hands. This is Yogaśvāmin who should be worshipped by Yogins seeking final liberation."

Final liberation ought to be the aim of the life of every human being. The specification of the Yogins seeking final liberation as worshipper of Vishṇu seated in the *yoga* posture and engaged in *dhyāna* is very significant. It indicates that those who worship Vishṇu with other ends in view, may worship images in other, more natural, postures.

Like Vishṇu, Śiva is also a great Yogi. He is the type of the Yogins.[1] The story of his practice of *yoga* is told graphically in Kālidāsa's poem *Kumārsambhava* composed not long before the Hindus began to make images of the Brāhmanic gods and goddesses in the Gupta period. Satī, the first wife of Śiva, being insulted by her father Daksha, who refused to invite her husband to his sacrifice, put an end to her life by performing *yoga* (*yogavisṛishṭadehā*). She was then reborn as the daughter of the Himalaya, the king of the mountains, and his wife Menakā, and was named Pārvatī and Umā (i, 21–2). After the death of Satī Śiva did not marry again, but began to practise austerities in the Himalayan region on the Ganges for gaining some unknown object, "though Himself the bestower of reward of austerities" (i, 57). He sat on a tiger's skin spread on an altar under a Devadāru tree in the *paryaṅka-bandha* posture, as described above (p. 8) engaged in *samādhi* or intense *dhyāna*. The object of Śiva's *dhyāna* or *samādhi* is thus defined by Kālidāsa (iii, 50) :—

"Withdrawing from the nine inlets his mind which was restrained by *samādhi* and fixing it on the heart, he was looking

[1] Hopkins, op. cit,, p. 223.

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with his soul on the Oversoul which the persons who know the field recognize as the imperishable."

Here the dual character of Śiva is clearly indicated.

If from literature we turn to Gupta and post-Gupta images of these gods that have come down to us, we find that most of those found in Northern India and in the cave temples of Elephanta, off the coast of Bombay, show the posture of *yoga* either fully or partially. Seated images of Vishṇu as Yogeśvara, though not unknown, are rare. The commonest type found all over Northern India is that of an image standing erect in the *kāyotsarga* posture with eyes partially closed and fixed on the tip of the nose in *dhyāna*. But the image-makers do not stop with showing Vishṇu himself engaged in meditation. The contagion of *dhyāna* infects the attendant figures, and even the faces of images of Vishṇu and Śiva engaged in action have eyes showing absorption in *dhyāna*.

This feature of the images of Vishṇu and other Brāhmanic gods found in Northern India, distinguishes them from the images of the same deities found in the Dravidian speaking areas of Southern India. The latter show open eyes, looking not inward like a Yogi, but outward, more in harmony with their active postures. I shall illustrate this point by dealing with the different varieties of South Indian images of Vishṇu. In the *Vaikhānasāgama* extracts from which are published by Gopinath Rao in his *Elements of Hindu Iconography* (vol. i, part i) three primary classes of images of Vishṇu are distinguished :—

Sthānaka-mūrti, standing image.

Āsana-mūrti, seated image.

Śayana-mūrti, reclining image.

Each of these classes is again divided into four sub-classes :—

Yoga-sthānaka-mūrti, image standing in the posture of *yoga*.

Bhogasthānaka-mūrti, image standing in the posture of enjoying pleasure.

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Vīrasthānaka-mūrti, image standing in the posture of warrior.
Abhichārikasthānaka-mūrti, malignant standing image.

Bhoga (enjoying), *Vīra* (warrior), and *abhichārika* (malignant) types of images of Vishṇu are peculiarly Dravidian, for they are not mentioned in the Purāṇas and other texts that have originated in Northern India. Standing images of Vishṇu from Southern India reproduced by Gopinath Rao (*Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. i, part i, plates xvii, xx, xxii–xxiii) all stand erect as in the *kāyotsarga* posture, but their eyes are wide open, indicating the spirit of *bhoga* and not *yoga*. This point is made clearer in the *āsana-mūrti*, seated image. *Yogāsana-mūrti*, image of Vishṇu in the *yoga* posture as described in the *Vaikhānasāgama*, is really image in the *paryaṅka-bandha* or *padmāsana* (cross-legged) posture. Herein it is also directed that the eyes should be only slightly open (*ishannimilitalochanaḥ*). In the seated image of Vishṇu in the cross-legged *yogāsana* posture from Bāgali reproduced by Gopinath Rao (plate xxiv), as also in images seated in other postures called *bhogāsana* and *virāsana* reproduced by the same author (plates xxv–xxix, xxx), the eyes are wide open. This feature must not be attributed to accident or to incompetence of the artist, but is deliberate. An examination of images of the third class, the inclined figures (*śayana-mūrti*) reproduced by Gopinath Rao, points to this conclusion. The inclined image (*śayana-mūrti*) of Vishṇu is known as *Jalaśāyin* (lying on water) or *Śeshaśāyin*, lying on the serpent Śesha or Ananta. The image of Vishṇu *Jalaśāyin* illustrates this myth. After the cosmic dissolution the universe was submerged in water. Vishṇu lay inclined on the body of the serpent Ananta or Śesha floating thereon, and, with eyes shut, slept the sleep of *yoga*, while enjoying the bliss of absorption in Self (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, iii, 8, 10). After sleeping in *yoga* for a long time Vishṇu desired to create. A lotus issued out of His navel and the four-faced Brahmā appeared on this lotus. In the description of the *Yogaśayana-mūrti* (image lying down and practising *yoga*) reproduced by Gopinath Rao from the *Vaikhānasāgama* it is

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stated that " the eyes should be slightly open " (*kiñchinunmilitalochana*). According to the myth narrated above there can be only one type of image of Vishṇu *Jalaśāyin* (lying on water), the type with closed or slightly open eyes and showing the expression of *dhyāna*. There cannot be *bhogāśayana-mūrti* (image lying down and enjoying pleasure) of the *Jalaśāyin*, to say nothing of *Vīra* (warrior) and *abhichārika* (malignant) types. The South Indian images of Vishṇu *Jalaśāyin* reproduced by Gopinath Rao, an early one from Aihole (plate xxxiii), and a late one of ivory from Trivandrum (plate xxix, fig. 2), have wide open eyes. There is an image of Vishṇu *Jalaśāyin* from Badami in the Prince of Wales's Museum, Bombay, assignable to the sixth century A.D., which also has wide open eyes.[1] If we now turn to the image of Vishṇu *Jalaśāyin* in a panel of the famous Vaishṇava temple at Deogarh (in the Jhansi district of the United Provinces), also reproduced by Gopinath Rao (plate xxxii), we not only find in this splendid composition Vishṇu himself lost in *dhyāna*, but the gods above, Lakshmī at the feet of the recumbent god, and the demons below bearing arms, all have also partially closed eyes, and are absorbed in *dhyāna*.

A cult of images of the early Śaiva saints and Vaishṇava Alvars (saints) corresponding to the cult of the images of the Buddhas and the Jain Tīrthaṅkaras or Jinas prevails in the Tamil country. Like the images of the Buddhas and the Jinas, the images of the Tamil saints do not show the posture of *yoga*, but are in naturalistic postures such as offering adoration with joined palms (*añjali*) or engaged in singing and playing with cymbals. There is a fine bronze image of the Tamil Śaiva saint Mānikka Vāchaka in the British Museum (Plate VII; 22·5 × 8·5 inches). The saint holds a manuscript in his left hand, and the natural pose of his right hand shows that he is explaining a point to an audience whom he is watching with open eyes. Compare the pose of this Śaiva saint with that of the Buddha from Sarnath seated on a lion throne (Plate VI). As stated above (p. 27) the Buddha is also

[1] Henry Cousens, *The Chalukyan Architecture of the Canarese Districts*, Calcutta, 1926, plate xvii.

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engaged in explaining some points to his disciples. But his eyes are not looking at the latter, and his mind is not interested in them, but is concentrated on reasoning and deliberation.

Medieval or post-Gupta sculptures in stone in the British Museum are Indo-Aryan in type and evidently come from five provinces of Northern India—the United Provinces, Central India, Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa. They mostly belong to the Bridge Collection. As this great collection was originally made in India by General Charles Stuart, ("Hindoo" Stuart), it might be renamed Stuart-Bridge Collection.

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Chapter V

POST-GUPTA SCULPTURES FROM UPPER INDIA

(A) EARLY POST-GUPTA SCULPTURES

ALL the important centres of Gupta art are situated within what are now the United Provinces and Central India, and may be termed Upper India. In the post-Gupta period beginning from the seventh century A.D., vigorous schools of sculpture flourished in Eastern India, in Bihar and Bengal, then known as the kingdom of Gauḍa, and in Orissa. But in the same period figure sculpture began to decline, to lose its spiritual meaning, in Upper India. Among the post-Gupta sculptures belonging to the Stuart-Bridge collection, there are over twenty pieces of grey or reddish grey sandstone, the material and the style of which proclaim their origin in Upper India. The typical specimens in this collection are described below.

Twelve-armed goddess at toilet (No. 81; 42 × 29 inches) (Plate VIII). The goddess is seated in *ardha-padmāsana*, half-lotus posture, on a fully-blown lotus flower with her left leg placed crosswise and her right leg hanging down and the right foot resting on a lotus. The eyes are half-closed, evidently looking at her reflection in the mirror, but rather blank in expression. With the middle finger of the uppermost right hand issuing from her back the goddess is putting a mark on her forehead, and her frontal left hand evidently held a mirror. The second and third right hands are broken off. The fourth right hand holds a conch shell with graceful fingers, and the fifth right hand holds a ring. With her frontal right hand the goddess holds a lotus flower between her breasts. The left uppermost hand is damaged; the second hand holds a shield; the third and the fourth and

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fifth left hands are lost; the lower left hand resting on the left thigh holds a round object which is damaged. The plurality of hands is one of the features of the images of the Brāhmanic and Mahāyāna deities that repels modern observers. If one can overcome one's natural bias against this abnormality, and direct attention to the harmonious arrangement of the arms in relation to the whole figure, as in the present case, one cannot but admire it. The rounded arms, the thigh, and the leg to which the drapery clings fast are modelled in an attractive fashion. The attendant figures, particularly the seated figures throwing the weight of their bodies on one arm, are convincing. But one defect, the blank look, mars the beauty of this well-balanced composition. This scuplture may be assigned to the eighth century A.D.

The image of Kālī or Chāmuṇḍā, of grey chunar sandstone, (No. 83; 47·5 × 28 inches) should probably be assigned to an earlier date, for the delicate modelling of the demon on whose back the goddess is seated reminds one of Gupta sculpture of the Benares school. According to Hindu mythology Kālī assisted Durgā in killing demons and gained the name Chāmuṇḍā by killing the demons Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa. The hideous face of the goddess is partially damaged. Otherwise the image is in a fair state of preservation. She is eight-armed. In her right uppermost hand she holds a sword ready to strike; in her second right hand she holds a noose; in her third right hand she holds a dagger which is damaged. The right frontal forearm is lost. In the left uppermost hand Chāmuṇḍā holds a severed head. The second left hand is placed below the left shoulder with the palm turned outward and the fingers bent. The third left hand holds a cobra, and the fourth a cup. In the right upper corner of the back slab a *vajra* (thunder weapon) is carved. The emaciated figure of Chāmuṇḍā is pervaded by the feeling of melancholy, signifying that slaughter, even of demons, is a melancholy task. The same spirit pervades the good images of Bhairava, the terrible form of Śiva, who also wears a garland of skulls like Chāmuṇḍā. Both these types are notable creations of Indian art. The bust

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of the demon below has the shape of an egg, and his right arm is loosely connected with it. A bird (probably a cock) is sitting on the left leg of the demon.

Other notable Brāhmanic sculptures from Upper India of the early post-Gupta period are :—

Image of the mother goddess (*mātṛikā*) Vārāhī (No. 47; 25·5 × 17 inches) with the snout of a boar and female body. She is four-armed, seated on a buffalo, and holding a child seated on her left knee with her left lower hand. Though executed in a careless manner, as evidenced by the support of the snout and the clumsy modelling of the right arms, the figure is full of vitality. The goddess inclines towards the left as if recoiling in fear or disgust.

Unfinished image of Sarasvatī playing on the Vīnā (No. 55; 26 × 13 inches). The most finished part of the image is the carrier of the goddess, a goose which is full of life. The goddess is four-armed. In her right upper hand she holds a garland of beads, and in her left upper hand a manuscript. With her two lower hands she is playing on the Vīnā. The middle finger of her right lower hand appears to be striking the string of the instrument.[1]

Three inscribed Jain sculptures form a remarkable group.

One of these (Bridge No. 82; 29 × 18·5 inches) shows a two-armed Yaksha, with a two-armed Yakshī to the left, seated on a throne, with right foot hanging down, in a niche between two pilasters (Plate IX). The top of the niche is decorated with the finial of the spire of an Indo-Aryan temple, including the ribbed circular piece called the *āmalaka*. In front of the finial is another niche resembling a gateway (*toraṇa*) in which a Jina is seated. In either upper corner of the rectangular back slab is a Vidyādhara flying down with a garland and carrying a Vidyādharī on his thigh. Below the main niche at the two ends and in the middle are three pot-bellied dwarfs, Bhūtas, who support the structure. On either side of the Bhūta in the middle is a pair of female musicians playing on the Vīnā. The composition is well-balanced. On the base is inscribed in early

[1] Laurence Binyon and Sir William Rothenstein, *Examples of Indian Sculptures at the British Museum*, London, 1923, pl. iv.

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Nāgarī characters of the eighth or ninth century A.D. the name—Anantavīrya, "He with infinite powers."

The second image is an eight-armed Yakshī (No. 65; 29 × 18·5 inches). In the short inscription on the base she is called Sulochanā, "She with beautiful eyes." With the right and the left uppermost hands she holds up a garland of flowers behind her head. The second right hand is damaged. In her third right hand she holds a wheel. The fourth right hand is placed on the right knee and is offering boon. Her second left hand holds a mirror, her third left hand a conch shell, and her fourth left hand a cup which is damaged. Above the head of Sulochanā is a Jina seated in full *yoga* posture. On either side of the Jina is a standing male *chauri* (fly-whisk) bearer, and next, standing considerably below on a lotus, is a female attendant holding a garland with her two hands. To the right of Sulochanā herself is a standing female holding a lotus in her left hand and touching her right hip with her right hand. In front of this latter is another female seated on a cushion and playing on the Vīnā. To the left of Sulochanā is another female attendant holding a *chauri* (fly-whisk) in her right hand and touching her hip with the left hand. In front of this female attendant is an elephant sitting, evidently the emblem of Sulochanā.

The third image, called Dhṛiti, Firmness, in the short inscription on the base, is also eight-armed (No. 80; 31 × 19 inches). In her right uppermost hand she holds a bunch of flowers; in her second right hand she holds a garland of beads and behind the hand is carved a rod; in her third right hand she holds the bud of a flower. The fourth right hand which was evidently in the pose of offering boon is broken off. In her left uppermost hand Dhṛiti holds also a bunch of flowers; in her second left hand a serpent. The third left hand, now broken off, held a battel axe the upper part of which is still in its place. The fourth left hand of Dhṛiti resting on the left knee is broken off. On the upper part of the rectangular back slab is a seated Jina with four male attendants who are playing on the Vīnā. Lower down there is a female attendant on either side of Dhṛiti, and below

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her is a kneeling human figure with hands joined in supplication. These sculptures were primarily intended to decorate Jain temples, and their decorative value is high. Carved in high relief with care, partly in the round, they convey an impression of plastic form and weight. But the faces of the main figures lack expression.

The base of a column (43 inches in height) of dark red sandstone with eight dancing female figures between pilasters does not belong to the Stuart-Bridge Collection. Sir William Rothenstein writes, "The richly ornamented base of column, belonging to the later Gupta period, provides a beautiful example of cosmic rhythm interpreted by means of dancing figures."[1] The well-rounded figures of the dancing girls in high relief, though swelling out of the stone, lack finish. There is a family likeness between the cut of the face of these figures and those of the Jaina deities described above. The pilasters and scroll-work that decorate this base bear a post-Gupta stamp. I should not assign it to an earlier date than the ninth century A.D.

(B) LATER POST-GUPTA SCULPTURES

Sculptures dating from the tenth to the thirteenth century are classed in this division. The earliest among the group from Upper India belonging to the Stuart-Bridge Collection is the recumbent figure of a female, with a child, lying on a serpent with seven heads, of grey sandstone (No. 107; 42 × 29·5 inches). This last feature and the absence of the Liṅga or phallic emblem of Śiva distinguish this image of the mother from other images of the type found in Bengal.[2] Though the figure of the goddess is considerably damaged it still retains evidence of delicate modelling and flow of line. Nine seated figures above the mother probably represent the nine planets, though they lack the distinguishing marks. The recumbent goddess is surrounded by a large number of attendants.

Four images of the group belonging to the Stuart-Bridge

[1] *Examples of Indian Sculpture at the British Museum*, p. 9.
[2] Bhattasali, *Iconography of the Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca, 1929, pp. 134–142.

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collection and representing the four chief Brāhmanic deities, Brahmā, Vishṇu, Sūrya, and Durgā, are of considerable iconographical interest.

Standing image of Brahmā (No. 51; 21 × 9.5 inches). Three of the four faces of the god are carved on the stone. The god is four-armed. In the right upper hand he holds a sacrificial spoon; with the right lower hand which grasps a garland of beads he is offering blessings. The left upper hand holds a manuscript (Veda); the left lower hand holds the *kamaṇḍalu*, drinking pot. On either side of Brahmā are two attendants, a standing female in the background and a standing male in the foreground. The female to the right is Sarasvatī and the female to the left is Sāvitrī. The face of Brahmā is expressionless.

Standing image of Vishṇu (No. 41; 50·5 × 26·5 inches). Four-armed. In the right upper hand the god holds the club (*gadā*), and he is offering boon with the right lower hand; the left upper hand holds the discus, and the left lower hand that held the conch shell is broken off. According to Varāhamihira this is the model of the four-armed Vishṇu. He writes (*Bṛihatsaṁhitā*, lviii, 34): "If you prefer to make Vishṇu four-armed, let one hand be represented as if he were in the act of bestowing his blessing, and the other holding a club; this for the right side; in the left hand is the conch and the discus." Among the twenty-four forms of Vishṇu the attributes of Upendra are thus distributed.[1] The decoration of the back slab is elaborate and well-balanced. In the topmost row of figures we find the Fish incarnation of Vishṇu on the right corner, and the Tortoise incarnation on the left corner. The gods and the demons are engaged in churning the ocean. The umbrella held up by a pair of flying figures projects over the head of the god. Below the row of flying figures and the umbrella, to the right, is carved the Boar incarnation of Vishṇu, and to the left the Man-lion incarnation tearing the entrails of a demon. Just below the Boar stands the Dwarf incarnation holding an umbrella, and below the Man-lion, Paraśurāma, also an incarnation of Vishṇu, resting his left hand

[1] Hemādri, op. cit., p. 115.

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on an axe. Farther below, on the right side, stands Vishṇu incarnated as Rama, son of Daśaratha, holding an arrow (?), and on the left side Balarāma holding a wine-cup in his right hand and a plough beside him. Below the image of Vishṇu is carved his vehicle, the celestial bird Garuḍa.

Standing image of Durgā (No. 110; 25 × 25·5 inches). The goddess is four-armed. The attribute held in her right upper hand is damaged, and the goddess offers boon with her right lower hand. Both the left hands are broken off. The back slab is elaborately decorated. Three projecting niches are carved on the upper part. Of the gods in these niches Ganesha in the left niche can be identified. Over each of the side niches is carved an image. Vishṇu above the right niche is still intact. The figure above the left niche is defaced. On the base on each side of Durgā are three female attendants and a worshipper. To the right is a squatting male worshipper (donor), and to the left a kneeling female worshipper. The head of the lion on the right is lost. To the left is a deer sleeping in peace.

Another typical specimen of the Upper Indian group of the Stuart-Bridge collection is an image of Sūrya, sun-god (No. 84; 40 × 15 inches). Sūrya is two-armed and holds two lotus flowers in his two hands. Seven horses carved on the base indicate that he is riding in his chariot which has one wheel and is drawn by seven horses. On two sides of the sun-god on the base are his two wives, Savarṇā and Chhāyā, holding *chauris*, and his two attendants, Piṅgala to the right holding pen and inkpot, and Daṇḍa to the left.[1] The female figure between the feet of Sūrya is the earth-goddess.

A pair of images of the goddess of learning from Upper India deserve notice. One of these is a white marble image of the goddess of learning, as conceived by the Jains, belonging to the Stuart-Bridge collection (No. 84; 26 × 14 inches). There is a late Nāgarī inscription on the base; but the image is much older and is rightly assigned to the eleventh or twelfth century A.D.[2]

[1] Hemādri, op. cit., p. 148.
[2] *Examples of Indian Sculpture at the British Museum*, p. 6.

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The image is four-armed. Both the right hands are lost. The left upper hand holds a garland of beads and the left lower hand a manuscript, which, together with the five Jinas seated cross-legged, carved on the upper part of the back slab, indicate that the image represents the Jain goddess of learning. The goddess stands in the *tribhaṅga* posture with the head inclined towards the right and the torso towards the left. Though the eyes are blank, the pose is graceful and lively. Below, on the base, are two female attendants and a squatting worshipper on either side—to the right a male and to the left a female, representing evidently the donors. The *chauri*-bearers do not lack movement. This image probably comes from Rajputana. Sir William Rothenstein notes the exquisite use of the jewelled ornaments on this image.

The other is a nearly life-size inscribed image of Vāgdevī (goddess of speech) of grey sandstone (Plate X; 51 × 20·5 inches). This image does not belong to the Stuart-Bridge collection. The inscription on the base records the installation of the image (*pratimā*) of Vāgdevī (Sarasvatī) in the city of King Bhoja and it is dated in Samvat 1091 (A.D. 1034). This Bhoja has been identified with the Paramāra King Bhoja of Dhar (in Malaẉa) who was reigning between 1018 and 1060.[1] The jewelled ornaments worn by this image—the crown, the necklaces, the armlets, the bracelets, the pendants round the loin, the anklets, and the style of showing the drapery—bear closest resemblance to those of the Jain goddess of learning described above. It is stated by Varāhamihira in the *Bṛihat saṁhitā*, lviii, 29, "An image should be represented in such a way that its equipment, dress, ornaments, and outward form be in agreement with the country. By possessing the required characteristics an idol will, by its very presence, bestow prosperity." The dress and the ornaments indicate that both these images come from the same region. But the contour of the face of Vāgdevī differs widely from the contour of the face of the Jain goddess of learning and that of other images carved in Upper India

[1] O. C. Gangoly and K. N. Dikshit, "An Image of Sarasvatī in the British Museum," *Rupam*, January, 1924, pp. 1–2.

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in the medieval period, and further discloses South Indian or Dravidian influence. Vāgdevī is also in the *tribhaṅga* posture with her head slightly inclined towards the left and her torso towards the right. As compared to the head and the lower limbs, the torso looks short and the figure lacks harmony of proportions. Her eyes show that she is looking downward attentively. The modelling of her limbs lacks the flexibility of the marble image. To the right of Vāgdevī are two male attendants, one holding a staff in the left hand in the fashion of a door-keeper, and the other, a pot-bellied dwarf, holding a mango fruit in his right hand, and with uplifted eyes gazing on the face of the goddess; to the left is another pot-bellied dwarf seated on a lion and with uplifted eyes and right hand supplicating the goddess.

To this group also belongs a remarkable image, transferred from the India Museum, of a six-armed goddess standing in an easy posture with her left knee slightly bent. Her face shows absorption in meditation. The palms of her two uppermost hands are joined in adoration. On her right and left are two attendants looking upward.

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Chapter VI

GAUḌIAN OR PĀLA SCULPTURE

WHEN from the grey or reddish grey sandstone images from Upper India of the post-Gupta period we turn our eyes to sculptures of black basalt of the same period from Bihar and Bengal we notice a fresh breath of spiritual life pulsating in them. In the post-Gupta period Bihar and Bengal formed the kingdom of Gauḍa, and the overlord of this area was known as the "Lord of Gauḍa". Early in the eighth century Yasovarman, king of Kanauj, invaded Magadha (South Bihar) and killed the reigning king of Gauḍa. Anarchy followed in the kingdom till Gopāla, a native of Northern Bengal (Varendri or Varendra), was elected king of Gauḍa. The dynasty founded by Gopāla, known as the Pāla dynasty, held sway over this extensive area for nearly four centuries. During this long period and under the Sena kings who succeeded the Pālas the school of art that flourished in this kingdom maintained a high standard of excellence. Though lacking the refinement and the spiritual intensity of the Gupta art, the Pāla school continued the Gupta tradition. The magnificent collection of Pāla sculptures in the British Museum, mostly belonging to the Stuart-Bridge collection, may be divided into three groups on iconographic grounds :—

(*a*) Images of Gautama Buddha, illustrating events in his legendary history.

(*b*) Mahāyāna Buddhist images.

(*c*) Brāhmanic images.

(A) IMAGES OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA

Eight great events of Gautama Buddha's life, called by M. Foucher eight miracles, are illustrated by most of the Gupta

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and post-Gupta images. These events are: the birth of the future Buddha—his issuing out of his mother's womb by the right side, while she stands holding the branch of a mango tree by her left hand; his Enlightenment or the attainment of Buddhahood at Uruvelā; his first sermon, known as Starting of the Wheel of Law, at the Deer Park (Sarnath); his acceptance of a bowl of honey from a monkey at Vaiśālī; the miracle of Śrāvastī—Buddha's creation of other Buddhas to defeat his rivals at Śrāvastī; his descent at Sāṁkāsya (Sankisa), accompanied by Brahmā and Indra, from the heaven of the thirty-three gods where he had gone to expound his doctrine (*Abhidharma*) to his deceased mother reborn there as a god; his subjugation of the wild elephant Nālagiri set against him by his enemy Devadatta at Rājagṛiha, the capital of Magadha; his death, known as the Mahāparinirvāna, final extinction. In some of the images of the Buddha seated in cross-legged posture touching the earth with the fingers of the right hand illustrating the Enlightenment, seven other figures illustrating the seven other miracles are carved in miniature around the main figure on the back slab. Two such images and two fragments of a third one are exhibited in the Indian Sculpture Room.

The most typical of these images belongs to the Stuart-Bridge collection (No. 24; 20 × 12 inches). The main image is the Buddha seated in cross-legged posture touching the earth with his right hand. The folds of his drapery clinging to the body are marked by single rhythmic lines. To the right at the bottom is the scene of Birth. Just above it the Buddha is seated on a high seat with both the feet hanging down (*bhadrāsana*) and both his hands placed on the breast in *vyākhyānamudrā*, gesture of explaining or preaching. This figure probably illustrates the Buddha's sermon at Śrāvastī after the performance of the great miracle. Just above this is carved a standing image of the Buddha with two male attendants, representing the Buddha's descent from heaven at Sāṁkāsya attended by Śakra (Indra) and Brahmā. At the top of the back slab is represented the dying Buddha. Just below, to the left of the main figure, the Buddha

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is shown as subjugating the elephant Nālagiri. Next below the Buddha is seated on a high seat with hanging feet and hands showing the gesture of preaching. The wheel with a deer on either side below the Buddha indicates that this figure illustrates the Buddha's first sermon at the Deer Park (Sarnath). The lowest figure to the left shows the Buddha receiving a bowl of honey from the monkey at Vaiśālī. The stanza embodying the Buddhist creed is engraved on the back slab in nail-headed (early Nāgarī) characters of the eighth or ninth century A.D. The stanza means :—

" The Tathāgata (Buddha) has explained the cause of those things that spring from cause ; the great Śramaṇa (monk, i.e. Buddha) has (also) declared (the way) of their suppression."

This image of the seated Buddha touching the earth with seven other great events in his legendary history illustrated on the back slab is not a very fine specimen of Pāla art. As already suggested, the best specimens of Pāla figure sculpture have not quite that softness and grace of modelling and that intensity of the expression of mental concentration that characterize the best Gupta figures. Like the eyes of the images of the Gupta period, the eyes of the images of the Pāla period are not, in most cases, very nearly closed, but are only half-shut, though directed to the tip of the nose, and therefore do not express intense concentration. But this pose of the eyes has its compensating advantage. It shows that the Buddha, the Jina, or the deity, though engaged in meditation, is not forgetful of his worshippers to whom he is, in most cases, offering blessings or protection, and not quite unmindful of the work which, in accordance with his gestures, he is carrying on.

A standing image of the Buddha in perfect state of preservation (Plate XI) presented by Sir Alexander Cunningham (20 × 10·5 inches) is a typical specimen of the early Pāla art. It is from Bodh-Gaya. The right hand of the Buddha, raised nearly as high as the shoulder, offers protection ; the lowered left hand holds a lace attached to the garment. The eyes are almost closed

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and directed to the tip of the nose. The face of the Buddha shows that, though he is engaged in meditation, he is not quite forgetful of those to whom he is offering protection. The modelling of the body, though not in high relief, produces the impression of roundness and volume. The drapery clings to the body and the folds are not marked by lines. The back slab is decorated by a row of beads round the border with leaves carved beyond. On either side of the Buddha's head is a *stūpa* carved in high relief. The Buddhist creed is engraved on the back slab in nail-headed characters to the right of the figure of the Buddha. On the base occurs this inscription :—

Kumāramitra Dharmamitraputra (?)
(This image is the gift of) Kumāramitra, son of Dharmamitra.

Another image of the Buddha seated in the cross-legged posture offering protection with the upraised right hand was presented by Sir Alexander Cunningham (16 × 9·5 inches) and is in perfect state of preservation (Plate XII). It does not appear to illustrate any particular miracle, and is unique among the images of the Buddha produced by the Gauḍian school. The Buddhist creed engraved in characters with nail-headed verticals on the back slab indicates its early date. The half-shut eyes are not directed inward, but disclose interest in the affairs of the outer world and even surprise. Though the image is in relief, it expresses a sense of the round to the full extent, and looks like a statue in the round carved independently and placed against the back slab, the simple decoration of which show it to advantage. The image has solidity and weight.

To the same period should be assigned the image of the standing Buddha belonging to the Stuart-Bridge Collection (No. 31 ; 17 × 10 inches). To the right of the Buddha stands three- (four-) faced Brahmā holding the fly-whisk in his right hand and water-pot in his left, and, to the left, Indra holding the umbrella. The group illustrates the descent of the Buddha from the heaven of the thirty-three gods to Sāṁkāsya. The face of the Buddha lacks expression and the modelling is rather flat. But the pose of

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Brahmā and Indra is graceful and natural. The right hand of the Buddha is offering boon and the left hand holds up the end of the garment near the left shoulder. The Buddhist creed is engraved on the back slab in nail-headed characters.

A small image of the seated Buddha with hands showing the gesture of explanation and the base showing two deer and the wheel of law illustrates the Buddha preaching the first sermon at the Deer Park near Benares (12·5 × 7 inches). The Buddhist creed is engraved behind the back slab.

Another image of the seated Buddha illustrates the presentation of the bowl of honey by a monkey at Vaiśālī (presented by Sir Alexander Cunningham; 11 × 7·5 inches). The eyes of the Buddha are half-shut but vacant. The folds of the drapery are marked by rhythmic conventional lines. Both the Buddha sitting cross-legged and the monkey kneeling at the base hold a bowl.

The most remarkable piece in the group of sculptures illustrating the great events in the legendary history of Gautama Buddha is the one that illustrates the Buddha's Mahāparinirvāṇa or passing away (23 × 19·5 inches) transferred from the India Museum (Plate XIII). The story of Gautama Buddha's passing is told in the Pāli *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, "the Book of the Great Decease." In his eightieth year, in course of his wanderings, the Buddha went to the Śāla Grove of the Mallas, at Kusināra (Kuśinagarī), on the farther side of the river Hiraṇyavatī. There his couch was spread for him with its head to the north, between the twin Śāla trees. The Buddha laid himself down on this couch on his right side, with one leg resting on the other. "And heavenly music was sounded in the sky, out of reverence for the successor of the Buddhas of old." [1] In the last watch of the night the Buddha expired after passing through the four stages of *jhāna* (*dhyāna*). Our sculpture fully agrees with the description of the text. The Buddha is lying stiff, on a couch placed between two Śāla trees, on his right side, with one leg resting on the other. The heavenly music sounded in the sky is indicated by two pairs of hands issuing from above and playing

[1] Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, pt. ii, London, 1910, pp. 148–9.

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on a drum and cymbals on the top of the back slab. The face of the Buddha expresses absorption in meditation (*dhyāna*) before his final passing away. The five shaven-headed mourning monks show varieties of posture and gesture. The monk to the extreme right is sitting mournfully by the couch on the earth, his drooping head resting in his left hand. The second monk sits with his right hand on his breast, evidently beating it in grief. The third monk is sitting by the couch with his back turned outward. The fourth, about to stumble, holds the couch with his hands. The fifth monk, probably representing Ananda, who attended the Buddha in his last days, is sitting at the feet of the master with joined palms and mournful countenance. There is movement in the drooping branches of the Śāla trees and the hands playing on musical instruments. The Buddhist creed is inscribed on the back slab in characters assignable to the tenth century A.D.

The future Buddha Siddhārtha Gautama is said to have cut off his hair with his sword soon after he left his home to turn a monk. Shaving the head was compulsory among the Buddhist monks. So the images of Gautama Buddha should have a shaven head. Among the images of the Buddha made at Mathura in the Kushan period there are several with shaven head. The Munkuar image of the Buddha of A.D. 448–9 also has the shaven head.[1] But most images of the Buddha of the Kushan period, and all images of the Buddha found outside Gandhara, with the exception of the Munkuar image, show hair on the head arranged in curls turning to the right. The reason for this deviation from the correct mode of representing a monk apparently is that hair arranged in little rings, curling to the right, is a sign of the *Mahāpurusha*, and the artists in carving images of the Buddha were more anxious to show him possessing all the signs of the *Mahāpurusha* than as an orthodox monk who strictly followed the rules of the order. The artists of Eastern India of the post-Gupta period did not remain satisfied with showing hair on the head of the image of the Śramaṇa (monk) Gautama

[1] V. A. Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, Oxford, 1911, p. 173, fig. 119; Coomaraswamy, op. cit., pl. xliii, fig. 162.

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Buddha in curls befitting a *Mahāpurusha*; they often went further and put a crown on his head and adorned his body with ornaments. That these crowned figures seated in the cross-legged posture and calling the earth to witness represent the historical human Buddha admits of no doubt. In one of the images of the crowned Buddha given by Sir Alexander Cunningham (11 × 7·5 inches) figures illustrating seven other great miracles of Gautama Buddha's life are carved on the back slab, indicating that the main figure forms part of the series and relates to the same career.

There are over half a dozen images of the crowned Buddha. The most remarkable image in this group is the one with the thunder weapon (*vajra*) drawn on the base (Plate XIV). It belongs to the Stuart-Bridge Collection (No. 26; 22·5 × 13 inches). The matted locks of hair are arranged on the head in the form of a pyramid and a tiara adorns the forehead. The Buddha also wears a necklace, armlets, bracelets, and anklets. The folds of the drapery are shown in conventional rhythmic lines in low relief. The face with eyes fixed on the tip of the nose expresses absorption in meditation. In the intensity of spiritual feeling and in the finish of modelling this image rivals the masterpieces of Gupta art. Though not in high relief, the figure conveys a sense of the round and of weight.

There are several friezes of basalts with niches containing seated images of the Buddha in earth-touching attitude. One of these has a long inscription in four lines in which the stanza containing the Buddhist creed is repeated. On another frieze belonging to the Stuart-Bridge Collection (No. 17; 6·75 × 35·75 inches) are carved figures of the seven Buddhas, viz. Vipaśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhū, Krakuchhanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, and Gautama.

(B) MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHIST IMAGES

The Stuart-Bridge Collection includes half a dozen splendid Mahāyāna Buddhist images of the early Pāla period. Finest

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among these and in excellent state of preservation is a standing image (Plate XV) of the divine Bodhisattva (would-be Buddha) Avalokiteśvara (No. 97 ; 47·5 × 22 inches). The god is two-armed. With the right hand he offers blessings or boon, and with the left hand he holds a lotus with stalk springing from the ground on his shoulder. The Bodhisattva stands in easy *tribhaṅga* posture with the torso slightly inclined to the left and the head to the right. On the head of the god is a pyramidal crown made up of rhythmically arranged matted locks of hair (*jaṭāmukuṭa*). In front of the pyramidal part of the crown the celestial Buddha (Dhyānī Buddha) Amitābha is seated in the cross-legged posture of *yoga*. To the right of the head of Avalokiteśvara is carved the figure of the Dhyānī Buddha Amoghasiddhi with the right hand offering protection. On the forehead of Avalokiteśvara is a tiara decorated with three garlands of pearls. The Bodhisattva bears a complete set of jewellery on his body. Curling tresses of hair fall on his shoulders. The loin-cloth (*dhūti*) is plain without marks or folds and clings to the body. A scarf, the folds of which are marked by deeply cut lines, surrounds the thighs and is tied on the outer side of the left thigh, the shorter end of it spreading out in a semi-circle, and the longer end after forming a loop falling down in rhythmic waves. The Bodhisattva has three eyes. The two lower eyes, directed to the tip of the nose, are half-shut, disclosing the deity's concern both with the inner and the outer world. The back slab is tastefully decorated with an egg-shaped halo behind the head, but not over-decorated. Below, to the right, stands the two-armed Tārā in the very graceful *tribhaṅga* (thrice-bent) posture, her left leg crossing her right leg, and the left foot touching the ground with the toes. The hands of Tārā are joined in supplication, and her face shows absorption in meditation. A lotus stalk with lotus springing from the ground passes by the inner side of her left arm. To the left of the Bodhisattva four-armed Bhṛikuṭī stands in the same posture with her legs in reverse order (the right leg crossing the left and the right foot touching the ground with the toes). The two upper hands of Bhṛikuṭī are joined in supplication. Her

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right lower hand holds a garland of beads, and her left lower hand a water pot. The artist who carved this image was determined to produce a thing of beauty, for he refrains from adding the two male attendants of Avalokiteśvara, Sudhanakumāra and Hayagrīva, to avoid overcrowding the composition, and he provides the figures of Tārā and Bhṛikuṭī with suitable backgrounds by carving them on separate plain back slabs. These unornamented back slabs bring out the roundness of these figures clearly. The composition combines plastic beauty with decorative effect. The Buddhist creed is inscribed round the head of the deity and the inscription on the base calls the donor whose name is illegible a lay follower of the Mahāyāna.

Two imposing seated images of two-armed Avalokiteśvara belong to the same collection. At the top of the back slab of both these images are carved the figures of the five Dhyānī-Buddhas, Vairochana, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Akshobhya, and Amoghasiddhi, and below them, on either side, a votive *stūpa*. Both the images are seated with the right leg hanging down. The torso of both the figures is inclined to the left and the head is slightly inclined to the right. The right hand of both the images offers boon and the left hand holds a lotus with stalk. To the right side of one of these (No. 28; 42·5 × 20·5 inches) is the standing figure of Tārā offering protection with her right hand and holding a bunch of flowers with her left. Sudhanakumāra sits in front of Tārā. On the left side is the standing image of Bhṛikuṭī. Her right upper hand offers boon and her right lower hand rests on her waist. The left upper hand of Bhṛikuṭī is damaged and the left lower hand holds a water-pot. The male attendant Hayagrīva sits in front of Bhṛikuṭī. The big lotus on which Avalokiteśvara sits is supported by two Nāgas with human body and hoods of serpents behind their human heads. Representations of the seven gems (*ratna*)—elephant, wheel, leader, householder, woman, jewel, and horse are carved on the base. The image of the Dhyānī Buddha Amitābha is carved on the crown. The face of the Bodhisattva lacks expression, though his figure does not lack vitality. The back slab is over-decorated.

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The folds of the drapery are marked by double lines in slight relief.

The other image of seated Avalokiteśvara (No. 29 ; 44 × 20 inches) is better preserved and on the whole a better work of art. The face of the deity with half-shut eyes does not express meditation, but shows him compassionately looking downward. Two full-blown lotus flowers to the right and the left of the head of the Bodhisattva very well balance each other. To his right stands Tārā offering boon with her right hand and holding a lotus stalk with her left hand. Bhṛikuṭī stands on the left. Her lower right hand and upper left hand are joined in supplication. Bhṛikuṭī's upper right hand holds a garland of beads and her lower left hand holds a water pot. A trident rests on her left shoulder. In the next row, to the right of the hanging foot of the Bodhisattva, sits Sudhanakumāra and Suchīmukha looking upward with his pointed pig snout. On the left side is seated Hayagrīva and behind him two kneeling worshippers, evidently the donor and his wife. The seven jewels are neatly carved at the foot. The Buddhist creed is carved on the base in Nāgarī characters of the tenth century A.D.

There is a small standing image of a four-armed Avalokiteśvara (9 × 7 inches) presented by Colonel L. A. Waddell. The upper right hand (damaged) holds a garland of beads ; the lower right hand offers boon ; the upper left hand holds a trident and the lower left hand holds the lotus stalk. To the right of the god are Tārā and Sudhanakumāra with joined palms, and to the left Bhṛikuṭī and Hayagrīva. The Buddhist creed is inscribed on the back slab.[1] There is also a smaller four-armed seated Avalokiteśvara (attended by Tārā and Bhṛikuṭī) belonging to the Stuart-Bridge Collection (No. 49 ; 7·25 × 5·5 inches). It is of granite.

Two well-preserved standing images of the Mahāyāna Buddhist goddess Tārā are included in the Stuart-Bridge Collection. Both are pulsating with life, have mass and weight, and satisfy

[1] A. Foucher, *Étude sur l'Iconographie Boudhique de l'Inde*, Paris, 1900, p. 104, fig. 13.

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the sense of the round. The smaller image (Plate XVI) bears the Buddhist creed inscribed on the back slab in nail-headed characters of the eighth or ninth century A.D. (No. 45 ; 27·7 × 13·5 inches). The goddess is two-armed. Her right hand offers boon and left hand holds the lotus stalk. The goddess stands in easy, graceful, thrice-bent (*tribhaṅga*) posture. Both the eyes are half-shut, and are turned compassionately downward. The nose is damaged. The goddess is attended on the right by a four-armed pot-bellied standing female holding an elephant-hide over her head with her two upper hands, a dagger in her right lower hand, and a cup in her left lower hand (probably a form of Ekajaṭā). To the right Tārā is attended by a male deity standing in thrice-bent posture, offering protection with the right hand and holding a battle-axe resting on the ground with the left hand. A *stūpa* is carved to the right of the head of Tārā on the back slab.

The Buddhist character of the bigger standing image of the two-armed goddess (No. 46 ; 46 × 23 inches) is also indicated by a *stūpa* carved on the back slab to the right of her head. The goddess stands in easy and graceful thrice-bent posture. She offers boon with her right hand and holds a lotus stalk with her left hand. She stands alone without any attendant figure. Her eyes are half-shut and directed to the tip of the nose. The folds of the cloth round the lower half of her body (*sāḍī*) are marked by double lines. The back slabs of both these images are decorated in nearly the same fashion with mouldings and a border of leaves. The mouldings round the smaller image are plain and those round the bigger image consist of three rows of beads.

There are two small images of Tārā given by Sir Alexander Cunningham, one standing and the other seated. The seated image has the Dhyānī Buddha Amoghasiddhi carved on the top of the back slab.

Among other members of the Mahāyāna Buddhist pantheon represented in the Stuart-Bridge Collection is an image of Kuvera, the king of the Yakshas, (No. 104 ; 29 × 16 inches) in an almost

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perfect state of preservation. The pot-bellied god of wealth is seated with his right knee hanging down. He is two-armed. In his right hand he holds a mango fruit, and in his left hand the neck of a weasel. On two sides of him on the back slab and below him on the base are pots full of coins. But the eyes of the Yaksha are half-shut and directed to the tip of the nose and his handsome face shows absorption in meditation. There is also a much smaller image of Kuvera presented by Sir Alexander Cunningham.

Another notable Mahāyāna image belonging to the Stuart-Bridge Collection is Mārichī (No. 43 ; 27 × 17·5 inches). The goddess is three-faced (one of which is that of a boar) and eight-armed, and she rides on a chariot drawn by seven boars. Her uppermost right hand holds a sword with which she is about to deal a blow ; her second right hand holds a *vajra* (thunder weapon) ; her third right hand holds an arrow ; her fourth right hand is damaged. The uppermost left hand of Mārichī holds a bow ; the third left hand a lotus stalk ; the fourth left hand an elephant's goad ; the second left arm is lost. The votive inscription on the base records the dedication of the image by a devoted lay worshipper (*para upāsaka*), whose name is not legible, in characters of the tenth century A.D.

There are other small but notable Mahāyāna Buddhist images. An image of three-faced and two-armed Mārichī (?) was presented by Sir Alexander Cunningham. The goddess stands in archer's posture with her right foot on the back of a man lying on his face. She holds a battle-axe in her right hand. There is also an image of an eight-armed goddess from a niche of the great temple of Bodh-Gaya presented by Sir Alexander Cunningham. The goddess stands in archer's posture. Her right uppermost hand holds a sword raised to strike ; her second right hand holds a thunder weapon ; her third right hand holds a garland of beads, and her fourth right hand offers boon. The uppermost left hand of the goddess holds a bell, the second left hand is placed on the breast, the third left hand holds a book, and the fourth left hand holds an elephant's goad. A small image of the

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Buddhist goddess Hāritī of grey sandstone with squarish face, presented by Sir Alexander Cunningham, is stated to have been found at Bodh-Gaya. But it must have been carved in Upper India.

(c) Brāhmanic Images

The mutilated image of Durgā killing the demon Mahisha (buffalo) (Plate XVII) belonging to the Stuart-Bridge Collection (No. 72 ; 41·7 × 20 inches), when perfect, was a masterpiece of the type. The back slab is semi-circular at the top. It is decorated with boldly cut scroll-work on the border. The flying Vidyādharas, each holding a garland and carrying a Vidyādharī on the back, are carved on floral backgrounds on the upper part of the back slab. The goddess Durgā is eight-armed. Her crown is broken off, and her forehead, left eye, nose, and lower lip are damaged. Her uppermost right hand which held up a sword is badly mutilated. With her second right hand she is taking out an arrow from the quiver on her back. Her third right forearm is broken off. Her lowest hand (now damaged) held a trident with which she is piercing the demon in human form who has issued out of the decapitated trunk of the buffalo. With her left uppermost hand (now badly damaged) she is holding the locks of hair of the demon and forcibly pressing down his head. Her second left hand is broken off. She holds a bell in her third left hand. Her lowest left hand holds a bow from which she is about to shoot an arrow. The goddess stands with her right foot firmly fixed on the ground and her left foot resting on the back of the beheaded buffalo. A demon raising a sword with his right hand and holding a shield in his left is running away while looking back at his pursuer. On the left the lion, the vehicle of Durgā, rushing out from behind, has fallen upon the buffalo with tooth and nail. There is movement all round. With her eyes directed downward the goddess herself is calmly and compassionately watching the last struggle of the dying demon. The limbs of the goddess and other figures are well-rounded, and the modelling is well finished. The eight arms of

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the goddess with their attributes are harmoniously correlated. The kneeling female figure holding a garland interpolated in the scroll-work on the base harmonizes well with the floral design. I should attribute this image to the seventh century A.D. and class it rather as a late Gupta than a Pāla work.

A stele bearing the representation of the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī or Umā (Plate XVIII) belongs to the Stuart-Bridge Collection (25·5 × 13·5 inches). The scene is dominated by the figures of the bride, Umā, to the right, and the bridegroom, Śiva, to the left, and between them is seated the diminutive figure of the Purohita, Brahmā, tending the sacred fire. The episode illustrated here is described by Kālidāsa in his *Kumārsambhava*, vii, 74–80. The bride and the bridegroom have met, glanced at each other for a moment, and have immediately turned away and contracted their eyes out of bashfulness. The bridegroom takes the hand of the bride. The touch sends a thrill of joy through the body of Umā and her hair stands erect, and the fingers of Śiva's hand begin to perspire. "The Purohita took the bride and the bridegroom whose eyes were closed as a result of touching each other round the fire, keeping it to the right, and caused the bride to throw fried grain into the fire." The figures of Umā and Śiva grasping each other's hands are true to life. Umā is two-armed. She holds a mirror in her left hand. Śiva is four-armed. He holds up a lotus flower in his upper right hand, grasps the right hand of Umā with his lower right hand, holds the trident in his left upper hand, and his left lower hand rests on the left thigh. Śiva wears a tiger's skin round his loin and a long garland of skulls round his neck, and a garland of pearls serves as his sacred thread. Vishṇu on the right of the pair and another male attendant on the left are handing over pots evidently containing fried grain. The seven planets with the demons Rāhu and Ketu stand in a row above. Two flying Vidyādharas are approaching with offerings of flowers. Below, on the base, are carved six figures engaged in dancing and playing on musical instruments. There are two other standing figures, one of whom is receiving something from the

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other, and Śiva's bull is watching the ceremony. The group is in low relief and the modelling is crude and unfinished. But all the figures are animated by natural vigour and appear to be spontaneously swelling out of the stone. The following inscription is carved on the upper border of the base in nail-headed characters of eighth or ninth century A.D. :—

De dharmmoyaṁ Śrī Kanhaka duhitrā Śrī Hādukena

"This (image) is the pious gift of Hāḍukā, daughter of Kanhaka."

Another remarkable sculpture of the Gauḍian or Pāla school is the image of the Dwarf incarnation of Vishṇu (Plate XIX) belonging to the Stuart-Bridge Collection (No. 74 ; 46 × 22·5 inches). The myth of the Dwarf incarnation is narrated in more or less detail in the great Sanskrit epics and some of the Purāṇas. The sculpture mainly follows the narrative of the *Harivaṁsa*, the supplementary book of the *Mahābhārata* (chap. 261–63). Bali, son of Virochana and grandson of Pralhāda, king of the *Asuras* or demons, overthrew Indra and the other gods and took possession of heaven and earth. The gods headed by Brahmā approached Vishṇu and requested him to reincarnate himself in order to recover possession of the worlds from Bali and restore them to the gods. Vishṇu was then reborn as a brahman dwarf and therefore called Vāmana. Bali undertook the performance of the horse sacrifice. Vāmana, then a boy, wearing the sacred thread of *muñja* grass and deer skin, and holding an umbrella with one hand and a staff in another, went to Bali's sacrifice. Bali asked the dwarf, "What can I do for you ?" Vāmana begged for three paces of land for building his teacher's fire-shrine thereon. Śukra, the leading officiating priest at Bali's sacrifice, warned the Asura king against giving away three paces of land to the dwarf who, he said, was not an ordinary dwarf, but Vishṇu himself who had come disguised as a dwarf to ruin him. But Bali rejected Śukra's advice and took a golden vessel to pour water in the hands of the dwarf giving away three paces of land. At this juncture Bali's grandfather, the venerable

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Pralhāda, also warned him against giving away three paces of land to Vishṇu who as a man-lion killed his (Bali's) great-grandfather Hiraṇyakaśipu. Bali rebuked Pralhāda for this warning. But as soon as he poured water in the hands of Vāmana making a gift of three paces of land, the dwarf ceased to be a dwarf and assumed the form of Trivikrama covering the whole universe, bound down Bali and sent him to the nether world. According to other sources one foot of Trivikrama covered the whole earth and the other foot reached the highest heaven where it was worshipped by Brahmā. In our image of Trivikrama a small bas-relief at the base illustrates the scene at Bali's sacrificial enclosure. The horse tied to a post to the left is the sacrificial horse. Vāmana (dwarf) stands to the right holding up umbrella with his left hand and with his right hand ready to receive water making the gift. Vāmana is confronted by Bali holding the golden vessel with his both hands. Behind Bali stands his queen, herself holding a tray evidently containing presents. Between Vāmana and Bali stands Śukra speaking to Bali with earnestness and with his right hand pushing away the latter's hands holding the vessel to pour water on the hand of Vāmana. Behind Vāmana the venerable Pralhāda is seated on a throne, pensive and apprehensive of the catastrophe that is to follow. The group is well designed. All the individual figures are impregnated by a common idea, the fear of the consequence of the fatal gift. The composition is well-balanced and well-proportioned. Towering above the group stands the massive figure of Trivikrama. His right foot presses the earth, and his left foot rises up to heaven and is being worshipped by Brahmā. Under the weight of the heavenly worlds covered by the left foot of the god his body inclines towards the right, and to maintain his balance his right lower hand rests on his right hip. Trivikrama is four-armed. His right upper hand holds a sword about to strike, and his left lower hand holds the conch-shell. The left upper forearm is broken off. Unfortunately the face of Trivikrama is totally defaced. This image can not be assigned to a date later than the ninth century A.D. The south

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Indian images of Trivikrama as found in the caves at Bādāmi and Mahābalipuram are eight-armed and more active in spirit.[1]

There are eight detached standing images of Vishṇu, six of which belong to the Stuart-Bridge Collection. Earliest in date is No. 38 (30 × 13·5 inches) the back slab of which is rectangular in shape with upper corners slightly rounded. The scheme of decoration of the back slab is simple. The god wears on his head an octagonal crown with flat top. Vishṇu offers boon with the right lower hand in the centre of which is carved a lotus (*padma*); he holds the club (*gadā*) in his right upper hand, discus (*chakra*) in his left upper hand, and conch shell (*śaṅkha*) in the left lower hand. This variety of the image of Vishṇu is called Trivikrama in the *Agni* and the *Padma Purāṇas* and Upendra in the *Siddhārtha Saṁhitā* (quoted by Hemādri in the *Vratakhaṇḍa, Chaturvargachintāmaṇi*).[2] The god stands quite erect in stiff posture. The arms and the torso are well-rounded and finished, but, as in most images of this class, the modelling of the lower half of the body is dry. Vishṇu has a serene countenance. To the right, Vishṇu is attended by a female with *chauri* (Lakshmī) and to the left a male with *chauri* (Jaya or Vijaya). This image is of the Early Pāla period (eighth or ninth century A.D.).

All the other detached images of Vishṇu of the Gauḍian school in the British Museum have back slabs pointed at the top with *Kīrttimukha*, head of a monster, carved thereon. With one exception (an image purchased in 1906 and showing a niche made up of two pilasters and trefoil arch above in which the figure of Vishṇu is carved) the back slabs of all these images are elaborately decorated with floral and animal designs. These images have more decorative than æsthetic value. In most cases the eyes of Vishṇu are fixed on the tip of nose and the face wears an expression of meditation. The god has on each side

[1] Longhurst, *Pallava Architecture*, pt. ii (*Mem. Arch. Surv. India*, No. 33, pl. xxi (*b*); R. D. Banerji, *Bas Reliefs of Badami* (*Mem. Arch. Surv. India*, No. 25), pl. ix (*a*) and xvi.

[2] Pandit B. B. Bidyabinod, *Varieties of the Vishnu Image* (*Mem. Arch. Surv. India*, No. 2), pp. 30–1.

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two attendants, a male and a female. The female attendant on the left is the goddess Sarasvatī engaged in playing on the Vīnā. No. 36 of the Stuart-Bridge Collection has a conch shell in the right lower hand, a lotus in the right upper hand, a club in the left upper hand, and a discus in the left lower hand, and represents the Nārāyaṇa type. No. 37 of the same collection has the discus in the right upper hand, the club in the left upper hand, and the conch shell in the left lower hand. Taking the lotus as the attribute of the right lower hand offering boon this image may be identified as Śrīdhara. Like No. 38 other detached images of Vishṇu of the Gauḍian school represent Trivikrama or Upendra.

There is also a standing image of Vishṇu on a stele bearing figures of the Brāhmanic triad, Brahmā, Vishṇu, and Śiva, belonging to the Stuart-Bridge Collection (No. 53; 25 × 38 inches). But as both the lower hands are lost, it is not possible to determine to what variety this image of Vishṇu should be assigned. The images of the three gods are carved in three separate niches side by side. The distribution of attributes of this image of Brahmā is the same as that of the standing image of Brahmā from Upper India (p. 44), but instead of two attendants on either side it has one attendant only. Śiva, who occupies the third place on the stele, offers boon with the right lower hand, holds a drum (*damaru*) in the right upper hand, and a trident in the left upper hand. The left lower hand is lost. Śiva has for his attendant on the right a two-armed emaciated female engaged in dancing, and on the left a four-armed standing female. Between the arches above are two Ṛishis (sages) seated resting on one hand and holding up an offering in the other hand.

A small image of Śiva in basalt deserves notice. The god is seated on a lotus with his right leg hanging down. He is four-armed. In his right upper hand he holds a cup (skull). The lower right hand is placed on the breast. In the left upper hand Śiva holds a trident and in his left lower hand that rests on the left knee he holds a flower. The bull of Śiva is carved on the base and on either side of him is a kneeling worshipper.

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There are two images of Sūrya, the sun-god, of the Gauḍian school. One of these (No. 58 ; 30 × 16 inches) with a back slab rounded at the top and decorated only by scroll-work on the border is earlier in date (early Pāla period). Another mark of early date of this image is the octagonal crown with flat top. The face of Sūrya is lifeless and empty. The god wears a breast-plate. One other uncommon feature of this image is that two wheels, instead of one, are carved on the base. According to the Purāṇas Sūrya drives in a chariot having only one wheel and drawn by seven horses.

The other image of Sūrya (Plate XX ; 42·5 × 22 inches) bears on the base above the horses this inscription in very corrupt Sanskrit in Nāgarī character of the tenth century A.D. :—

Oṁ Indranilamaṇisisyaḥ śilāya buddhihṣālinā

ghaṭitāya kṛitajñena Amṛitena susi(l)pinā

" (This image) has been carved in stone by the wise, grateful, and good artist Amṛita, pupil of Indranilamaṇi."

Here we have the names of two Gauḍian sculptors, Amṛita, and his teacher, Indranilamaṇi. In order to determine how far the claim of Amṛita as a *susilpin*, good artist, is justified, we should consider two halves of this image, the upper half and the lower half, separately. The upper half of the back slab is very tastefully decorated with the floral and animal motives usually found on later Pāla sculptures. The upper half of the image of Sūrya itself forms rather an integral part of this decorative scheme than an independent sculpture, though the beautifully modelled torso and the arms throb with life, and with half-shut eyes the god is looking towards the earth below with complacency. In this part of the image the artist follows convention with consummate skill. In the lower half, actuated by the æsthetic impulse, he breaks away from convention by ordering the subordinate figures in such a manner as to leave sufficient plain background to show them off to best advantage. Sūrya himself and all his attendants wear boots. To the extreme right and the extreme left of the group two women (called Ushā and

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Pratyushā by some) are moving threateningly with bow and arrow. Behind the woman on the right stands the corpulent and pot-bellied Piṅgala holding a pen in his right hand and an ink-pot in his left. Next to him stands a female, a wife of the god, holding a *chauri*. To the left of Sūrya stands another wife holding *chauri*, and the second male attendant, Daṇḍa, stands in *tribhaṅga* (thrice-bent) posture, offering protection with his right hand. Sūrya stands erect and his body is in a state of stiff repose, but his attendants are in alert repose. At the feet of Sūrya stands the earth goddess, and in front of her is his winged charioteer, Aruṇa, guiding the horses with outspread wings. The seven horses carved in high relief on the base do not lack movement.

A standing image of Durgā (Stuart-Bridge Collection, No. 54; 43·5 × 26 inches) shows the warrior goddess at peace. She is four-armed. In her right upper hand she holds a peculiar weapon, and in her left upper hand she holds a mirror. Both of her lower forearms are broken off. The goddess stands erect. She is three-eyed. With her two partially closed lower eyes she is looking downward. To the right of the goddess is a two-armed Gaṇeśa standing in thrice-bent (*tribhaṅga*) posture. To the left is a two-armed standing male figure, probably Kārttikeya, holding the thunder-weapon in his right hand. Besides Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya there are female *chauri* bearers. The upper part of the back slab is broken off. It is decorated in the same fashion as the other later Pāla images and must have been pointed at the top. The head of the lion on the base is broken off.[1]

As already stated in Chapter II (p. 13), though the ostensible object of the Indian sculptors was not to create form in full three dimensions, they show an extraordinary grasp of three-dimensional form in these reliefs. But in some of their reliefs, such as the images of Gaṇeśa and other corpulent deities, there is a conscious endeavour to show mass and volume that please not only the eyes, but seem to please the sense of touch. Again,

[1] R. D. Banerjee, *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture* (*Arch. Surv. India, New Imperial Series*, vol. xlvii), p. 115, pl. lvii (*b*).

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Indian, particularly Indo-Aryan, figure sculpture is fundamentally static. But in the images of dancing Gaṇeśa and dancing Śiva the Indian sculptors show full mastery of the rhythmic movement of figures with multiple arms. No. 61 of the Stuart-Bridge Collection, though small in size (7·5 × 5·5 inches), is a fine example of dancing Gaṇeśa (Plate XXI). The elephant-headed god who is dancing watchfully is eight-armed. In his right uppermost hand he holds a garland of beads, and in his second right hand a battle axe. His third hand offers protection and his fourth right hand holds one of his tusks. The uppermost left arm of Gaṇeśa is broken. In the second left hand he holds a flower, in the third left hand a plate containing sweet balls, and in his fourth left hand a serpent. To the right of the dancing god a seated female is playing on a drum, and to the left a man is playing on cymbals. On the base a mouse, the carrier of the god, is moving with alertness.

A group of the seven mothers with Chāmuṇḍā carved on a basalt slab (Stuart-Bridge Collection, No. 113; 5·5 × 18·5 inches) is of considerable iconographic interest. The mothers are: Māheśvarī, Brahmāṇī, Kaumārī, Indrāṇī, Vaishṇavī, Vārāhī, and Nārasiṁhī, named respectively after Maheśvara (Śiva), Brahmā, Kumāra (Kārttikeya), Indra, Vishṇu, Varāha, and Narasiṁha. The mothers are not the consorts of these gods, but are independent goddesses who emanated from these gods and personify their *sakti* or energy. They have the same attributes and vehicles as the gods after whom they are named. These seven mothers attended the marriage of Śiva with Umā (Pārvatī).

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Chapter VII

SCULPTURES FROM ORISSA

HITHERTO we have endeavoured to determine the provenance of the sculptures of the Stuart-Bridge Collection in a general way either in Upper India or in the Pāla Kingdom of Gauḍa (Bihar and Bengal) with the help of material and style. But for sculptures from Orissa we have in addition the testimony of Kittoe. When Lieutenant Kittoe visited Bhuvaneswar in 1835, and was engaged in preparing impressions of inscriptions, he was treated with discourtesy by the priests who told him "how their images and relics had been carried off by former antiquarians, and pointed out whence the commemorative slab had been actually cut out from the temple of Ananda Basu Deva (Ananta-Vāsudeva) at Bhuvaneswar by a late Colonel Sahib". In the list of donations to the Museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal appended to the *Asiatic Researches*, vol. xi, 1810, Prinsep found General Stewart (Stuart) set down as the donor of "two slabs with inscriptions from Bhuvaneswar in Orissa". Prinsep took a very unfavourable view of the action of Stuart and writes :—

"I cannot conclude these preliminary remarks without animadverting upon the ruthless spoliation which is often carried on by 'soi-disant' antiquaries, to the direct perversion of the true object of research—the preservation of ancient monuments, and their employment to elucidate the history of the country." [1]

On the suggestion of Prinsep the Society restored the two inscribed slabs, with another inscribed slab in two pieces (probably presented to the Society also by Stuart) to the priests of Bhuvaneswar through Lieutenant Kittoe.

[1] *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. vi, 1837, p. 280.

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In his article on this third slab (now lost) Prinsep writes :—

" The stone was, as stated above, returned to 'Bhuvaneswar': but Mr. Kittoe did not find as he anticipated any resulting cordiality or goodwill among the priesthood of the place; on the contrary they brought him a long list of purloined idols and impetuously urged him to procure their return as he had done that of the inscriptions." [1]

A vigorous school of art sprang up in Orissa in the eighth century A.D., the remnants of which lie scattered over the hill tracts of the Cuttack District and at Jajpur. This school flourished in full vigour for about six centuries. The last great monument, the temple of Sūrya at Konarak in the Puri District, was built by King Narasiṁha I (A.D. 1238–1264). Most of the sculptures from Orissa collected by " Hindoo " Stuart and exhibited in the British Museum are of chlorite schist and are assignable to the later medieval period extending from the eleventh to the thirteenth century A.D. They lack the suppleness of the contemporary Gauḍian work, but disclose stronger plastic sensibility and keener interest in the figure as distinguished from decorative patterns.

Earliest in date (eighth or ninth century A.D.) in this group is a figure (No. 39 ; 17 × 12·5 inches) of Durgā killing the demon Mahisha (buffalo) in a niche of decomposed khondalite. The goddess is eight-armed. Her uppermost right hand holds a sword ready to strike. Her second right hand holds a trident with which she is piercing the neck of the demon with human body and buffalo-head. Her third right hand holds a thunder-weapon, and her fourth right hand an arrow. With her right foot the goddess presses the breast and with the uppermost left hand presses down backward the mouth of the demon. With her second left hand the goddess holds a shield. With her third left hand a stringed bow, and with her fourth left hand a serpent which is biting the mouth of the demon. The demon holds a sword in his right hand, and pushes the neck of the lion with

[1] *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. vii, 1838, p. 558.

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his left hand. The figure of the goddess is full of vitality and movement.

Two standing female figures (No. 93; 25 × 6·7 and 24·5 × 6·7 inches), one of them leading one child with her right hand and holding another child on her hip with her left arm, probably come from Bhuvanesvar and may be assigned to the eleventh or twelfth century A.D. The modelling of these figures is supple and graceful.[1]

Four remarkable Jain statues of steatite, two standing images of the Jina Pārśvanātha (No. 95; 1$\frac{9}{10}$ × 8·7 inches, and No. 96; 14·7 × 7·5 inches), a standing woman with two children and a seated Jina on a tree above her head (No. 94; 16·5 × 9 in.), and a stele bearing standing images of the Jinas Ṛishabha and Mahāvīra (No. 99; 26·7 × 14·2 inches), probably come from the collection of Jain images deposited in the Jain cave temples at Khandagiri near Bhuvanesvar in Orissa. Some very similar Jain images are still to be seen in one of the caves there. All the standing images of the Jinas are in the posture of *yoga* known as the *kāyotsarga*, standing quite erect with feet placed side by side on the same line, and both the arms hanging down on sides and the fingers of the hands touching the lower part of the thighs. Ṛishabha, the first of the twenty-four Jinas, who is also recognized as an incarnation of Vishṇu, is known by his crown made of matted locks of hair and his cognizance, a bull, and Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth Jina, is known by his cognizance, a lion. The most remarkable thing about the images of Ṛishabha and Mahāvīra on our stele (Plate XXII) is the difference in the expression of their faces. The eyes of Ṛishabha are fixed on the tip of the nose and his face shows absorption in meditation. The eyes of Mahāvīra look downward and show a mind worried by unpleasant thoughts. The nakedness of the pair is tiring to the eyes of the observer.

Sūrya (No. 57; 42·5 × 22 inches). Not only the material, but the rectangular size of the stele, the plan of decoration (Kīrttimukha at the top and trefoil arch cut through the stele), two male

[1] *Examples of Indian Sculpture at the British Museum*, pl. v.

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attendants with sword and shield, and the representation of the reins of the horses held by the charioteer Aruṇa—traits that also characterize the images of Sūrya belonging to the great temple of Konarak,[1] indicate the Orissan origin of this image. But the points of difference between this image and the images of Sūrya at Konarak are no less striking. The swordsmen attending this image do not wear crowns on their heads, as the swordsmen attending the Konarak images do. The figures of Daṇḍa and Piṅgala, and the two female *chauri* bearers (wives), are carved on the Konarak images (Piṅgala with pen and inkpot on the left of Sūrya and Daṇḍa with staff on the right), but not on this image. It may therefore be inferred that this image of Sūrya does not come from Konarak and is probably of an earlier date. The face of this Sūrya is expressionless; but the faces of the Konarak images show absorption in meditation. The modelling of the main figure is stiff, but the minor figures, the Vidyādharas, the two women holding bows, and the horses on the base are full of movement.

The five [2] seated images of the Grahas (Planets) (Nos. 100–104; average size, 38 × 20 inches) are undoubtedly from Konarak and probably belonged to the great temple of Sūrya. The pentafoil arch and other features are also found in other known groups of images of the nine Grahas from Konarak. Only one of these figures, that of the seated Sūrya holding lotus flowers, can be identified. Other figures do not hold the attributes peculiar to the different Grahas, but all hold garlands of beads in the right hand, and a pot, probably containing nectar, in the left hand. A pot-bellied figure wearing a beard can be identified as Bṛihaspati (Jupiter). All these figures sit cross-legged and their eyes are half-shut but blank.

The image of Varāha, or Boar incarnation of Vishṇu (No. 44; 33 × 16 inches) must have been taken out of a niche of one of the temples of Vishṇu at Bhuvaneswar. Varāha stands in archer's posture with the left foot put forward and holding up the earth

[1] R. D. Banerjee, *History of Orissa*, vol. ii, Calcutta, 1931. Plates facing pp. 88 and 384.

[2] Only three are at present exhibited.

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goddess on his upper left forearm. When the earth, unable to bear the burden on her surface, was submerged in water, Vishṇu in the form of Varāha raised her with his tusk. With his right lower hand Varāha holds the left arm of his female attendant to the right. He holds the discus in his right upper hand and the conch shell in his right lower hand. On the left a Nāgī is offering worship with joined palms. The limbs of Varāha are solid and massive, but stiff.

Dancing Śiva (No. 73 ; 41 × 21·2 inches) evidently from a temple of Śiva at Bhuvaneswar. An image of dancing Śiva is installed in a niche at the base of the spire of a temple of Śiva, above the entrance door. A pentafoil arch is cut through the rectangular stele (Plate XXIII). Śiva is eight-armed. By his two uppermost hands he holds up above his heads two serpents, with the head of one of them to the right and the head of another to the left with hoods outspread, in order to maintain the balance during the dance. The second right forearm is lost. With the third right hand, now partially mutilated, the god offers protection. The fourth right hand is broken off. The second left arm is thrown across the chest and is moving rhythmically with the rhythm of the dance. The third left forearm is lost, and the fourth left hand holds a cup made of a human skull. The left foot with the knee considerably bent rests on the ground, and the toes of the right foot touch the ground gently. To the right a male with normal round limbs, and to the left an emaciated male, are dancing in exactly the same fashion as Śiva. Next to them on two sides are two persons beating the drum with gusto. At the base, on two sides of the lotus throne, two persons are playing on the flute and cymbals with as much enthusiasm. Behind the dancing Śiva his bull is watching the dance with upturned head. The figure of Śiva is very gracefully carved almost in the round and produces the impression of perfect and solid roundness. It has been rightly said that great works of art do not yield their secrets all at once. To a careful observer this image of the dancing god of gods will convey an exhilarating sense of

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rhythmic motion impregnated by a sense of peace and permanency. The last element is contributed by the expression of complacent meditation that illumines the face of Śiva. This last point suggests the symbolic meaning of the dance of Śiva which is thus explained in the *Kurma Purāṇa* (part ii, 4, 33) wherein Śiva himself is made to say, "I am that god who sets everything in motion and who, absorbed in *yoga* and enjoying highest bliss, is always dancing. He who knows that knows *yoga*." The dance of Śiva means, on the one hand, dance accompanying the enjoyment of the bliss of *yoga*, and, on the other, his creative cosmic activities.

In Dravidian images of dancing Śiva where he is looking outward with wide open eyes the cosmic aspect of the dance is emphasized. But in the Indo-Aryan images an attempt is made to give form to the other aspect, the dance of the god as Yogi or the liberated soul, as well.

Another remarkable image from Orissa (No. 60; 40 × 22 inches) is the five-faced and ten-armed Gaṇeśa of chlorite schist (Plate XXIV). Gaṇeśa sits under an elegantly carved tree on a high throne with his right leg hanging down and his left leg resting on the throne. In his uppermost right hand Gaṇeśa holds a discus, in his second right hand a trident, in his third right hand a bow, and in his fourth right hand a club. The fifth right hand holds a mango and the forearm rests on the right thigh. In his uppermost left hand Gaṇeśa holds a lotus. His second and third left hands hold the lotus stalk. The fourth left hand of the god holds a *chauri* and the fifth left hand his broken off tusk. A female holding a lotus flower in her left hand is seated on the left leg of the god looking upward with blank eyes. But the elephant face of Gaṇeśa himself shows life within. Below the right foot of Gaṇeśa, of which the toes are broken off, is his vehicle, a mouse. There are other figures below the throne intended for the decoration of the base. A five-faced and ten-armed Gaṇeśa recovered from the ruins of Rampal in Vikrampur in the Dacca District is now deposited in a shrine near Munshigunge. A passage of the *Śāradatilaka*

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Tantra enables Dr. N. K. Bhattasali to recognize it as Heramba.[1]

Life-size group of Śiva and Pārvatī on a rectangular stele (No. 70; 72·5 × 46·5 inches). Śiva is seated on a lotus with his right leg hanging down and resting on another lotus, and Pārvatī or Umā is seated on his left thigh with her left leg hanging down. Śiva is four-armed. He holds a garland of beads in his upper right hand, and a flower with stalk before Pārvatī with his lower left hand. He holds the trident with his upper left hand and embraces Pārvatī with his lower left arm. Pārvatī is two-armed. She embraces Śiva with her right arm and holds a mirror in her left hand. Sir William Rothenstein writes, "The treatment of the god and goddess, as is frequent in the Bihar school, is over-conventionalized and uninteresting. The attendant *apsarā* figures, sounding their music through space as they move, conceived with remarkable swiftness and harmony of design, are, on the other hand, brilliantly carved."[2] The eyes of Śiva and Pārvatī are blank, and their faces lack expression. The modelling of the upper part of the body of Śiva is flat and dry. But the Vidyādharas and Apsarās appear to have sprung out of the background and are offering adoration and playing on musical instruments with serene countenance.

Durgā slaying the demon Mahisha, from Orissa (No. 78; 75 × 21·5 inches). The image is eight-armed. In her right uppermost hand the goddess holds an uplifted sword. With her second left hand she is taking out an arrow from the quiver on her back, and her third right hand holds a trident which is fixed on the face of the demon, human in form, that has come out of the decapitated body of the buffalo. The fourth right forearm is broken off. The goddess holds a shield in one of her left hands, and in another left hand she probably holds a noose which goes round the neck of the demon. Two other left hands of the goddess are broken off. The image is lifeless and marks the declining stage of the Orissan art.

[1] Bhattasali, op. cit., p. 146; pl. lvi (*b*); R. D. Banerjee, *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture*, pl. lx (*a*).

[2] *Examples of Indian Sculpture at the British Museum*, pp. 9–10; pls. vii and viii.

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PLATES

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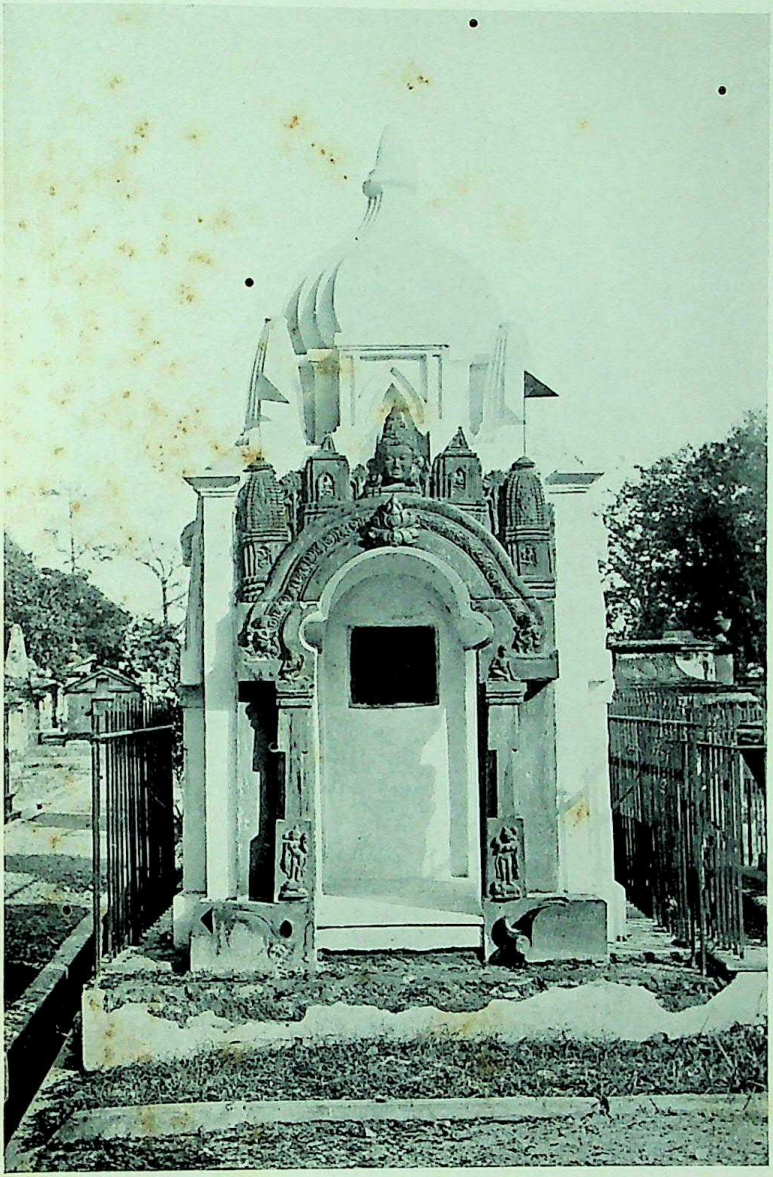
PLATE I



Tomb of " Hindoo " Stuart, South Park Street Cemetery, Calcutta

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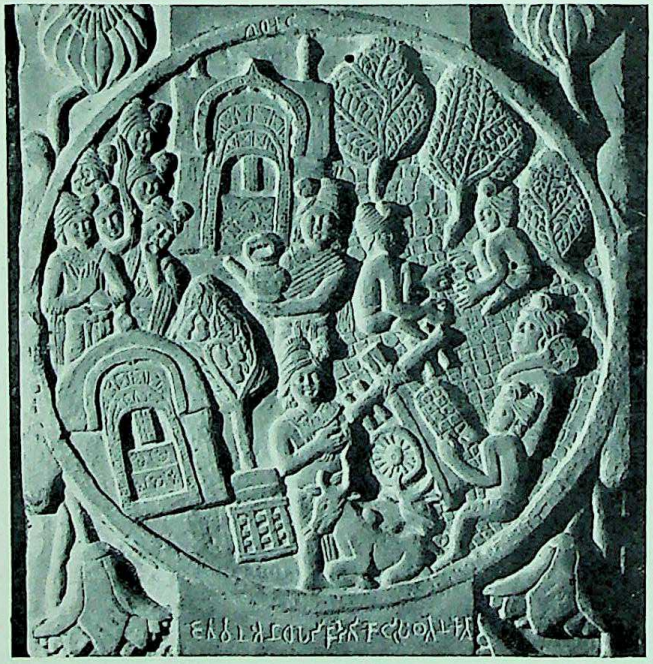
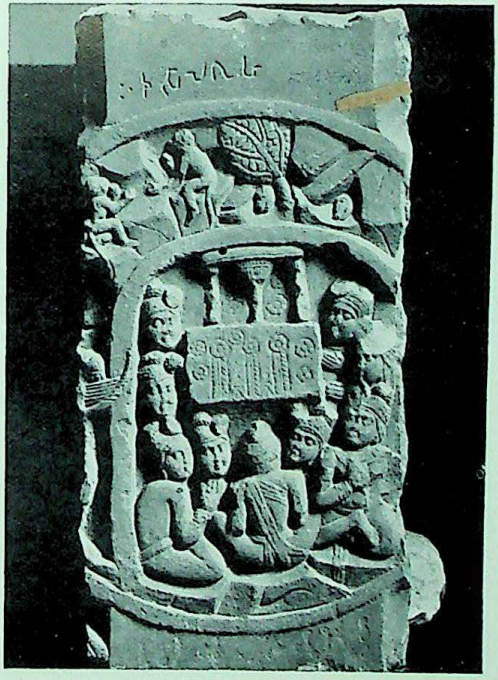


(*a*) Medallion of a Bharhut rail pillar
Gift of the Jetavana Park



(*b*) Medallion of a Bharhut rail pillar
Indraśāla Cave

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(*a*) Panel of a Bharhut pillar
Ajātaśatru bows to the Buddha

(*b*) Medallion of a Bharhut pillar
The *bodhi* tree of the Buddha Vipaśyin

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PLATE 10

Headless standing Buddha in the Mathura Museum
Fourth century A.D.

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Standing Buddha from Sarnath
Fourth century A.D.

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Seated Buddha from Sarnath
Fifth century A.D.

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Tamil Śaiva saint Mānikka Vāchaka

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PLATE VIII

Twelve-armed goddess

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Yaksha Anantavīrya

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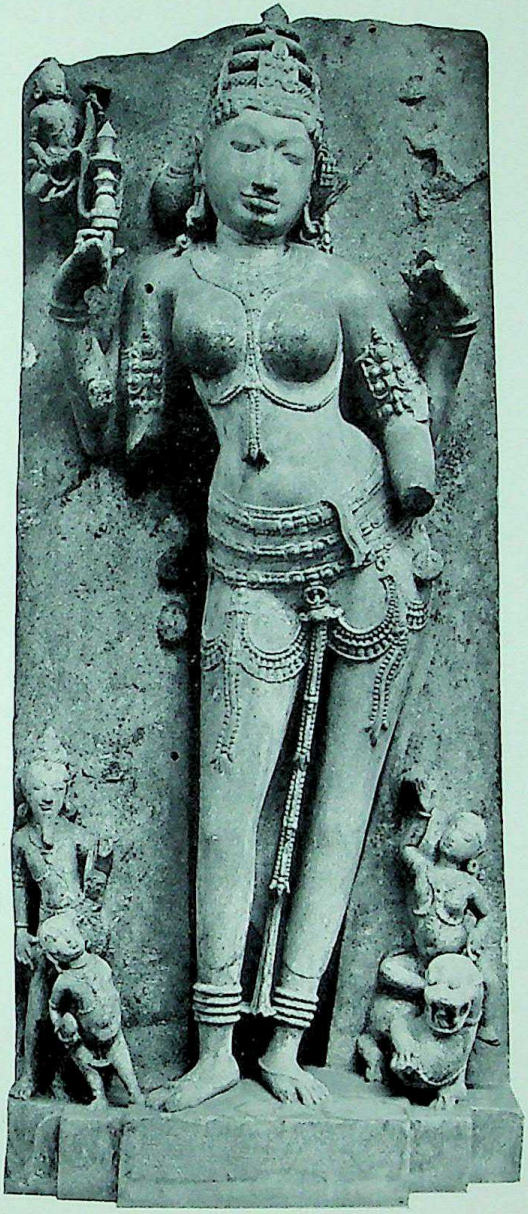

Vāgdevī

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Standing Buddha offering protection

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Seated Buddha offering protection

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Passing of the Buddha at Kuśinagarī

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Crowned Buddha in earth-touching attitude

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Avalokiteśvara

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PLATE XVI

Tārā

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Durgā killing the demon Mahisha

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Marriage of Śiva and Umā (Pārvatī)

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The Dwarf incarnation of Vishnu

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Sūrya (Sun-God)

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Dancing Gaṇeśha

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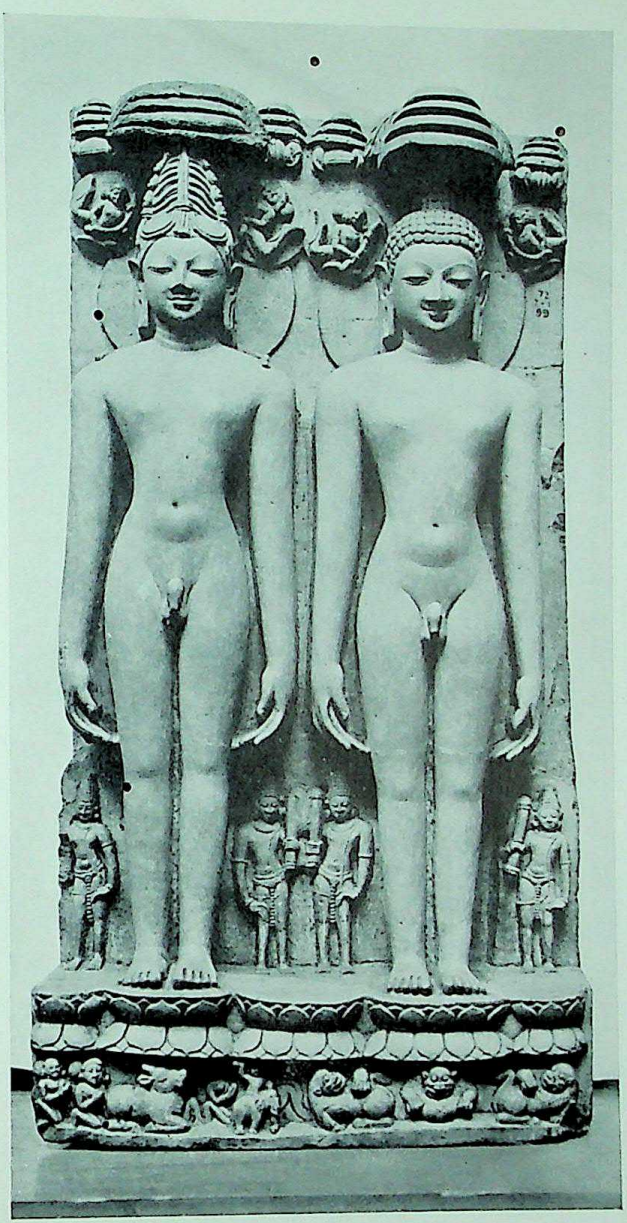

Rishabha and Mahāvīra

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Dancing Śiva

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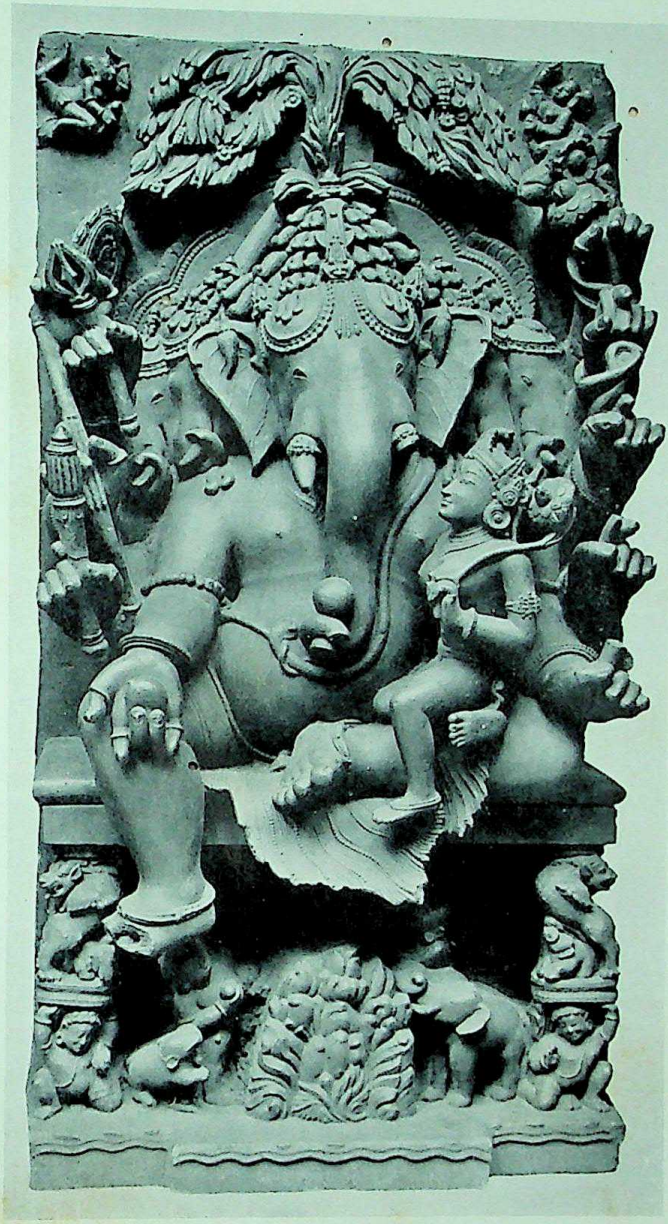

Five-faced Ganeśa

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